

النَّفَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ فِي الْمَسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ

THE GEMS of THE ALAWIYYA

CONCERNING SUFISM

Imam al-Haddad

al-Hadrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him



قَدْ كَفَانِي عِلْمُ رَبِّي مِنْ سُؤَالِي وَأَخْتِيَارِي

*It is more than suffice and satisfying for me
that My Lord knows all my questions and choices.*

﴿

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Maqam Imam al-Haddad
Tarīm - Hadramawt - Yemen

THE GEMS on THE ALAWIYYA CONCERNING SUFISM

Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad

لِقَامِ الْإِعَامِ الْحَرَاءِ
الْحَلَوِيَّةِ وَشَنَاعِيَّةِ
بَنِي دَلَالِ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَشَكَرِيَّةِ
تَرِيمِ الْحَدَّارِيَّةِ

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

النَّقَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ فِي الْمُسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ

The Gems of the Alawiyya
Concerning Sufism

Imam al-Haddad

al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini

May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him

لِإِلَمَامِ الْحَدَادِ

الْحَضْرَمِيُّ الشَّافِعِيُّ الْحُسَيْنِيُّ

رَحْمَةُ اللهِ تَعَالَى

Door

لِقَامِ الْإِعْامِ الْحَرَادِ

تَرَيم

الْحَاوِي

بِنْجَسْتِي وَالْمُسَوِّيِّ وَشَكْرِي

An English Translation

النَّفَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ

فِي

الْمُسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ

لِإِلَمَامِ شَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ قُطْبِ الدَّعْوَةِ وَالْإِرْشَادِ

الْحَبِيبِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَلَويِّ الْحَدَادِ

الْحَضْرُمِيِّ الشَّافِعِيِّ الْحُسَيْنِيِّ

رَحْمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

Front Cover showing the restored front door entrance to
Imam al-Haddad House in Hawi Tarim Hadhramaut Yemen

The Gems of the *Alawiyya* Concerning Sufism

By the Imam, al-Sheikh of Islam,
the Pivot of *Dakwah*, the Guiding Light
the Beloved Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad
al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted have mercy upon him

Imam Al-Haddad's manuscripts
were recompiled into books by
Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader
Al-Haddad. Subsequently,
they were re-edited, reprinted,
translated and distributed by
various inspired parties.

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Maqam Imam al-Haddad
Hawi – Tarim – Hadhramaut

Contents

Biography of Imam al-Haddad	7	
Author's Preface	12	
Qs	Collection of Questions	Page
1-2	Sayyid AbuBakr bin al-Sheikh al-Saqqaf.	15
3	Sheikh AbdurRahman alKhatib Ba-Raja,	21
4-9	Sheikh Abdul Kabir ibn Abdullah Ba-Hamid	27
	A Conlcusion on Repentance	35
10-14	Sheikh, Muhammad ibn Ahmad Sal'aan	38
15-19	Sheikh Abdullah Ba-Sa'id al-Amudi	42
20-31	Imam al-Haddad's scribe, Abdurrahman Bin Zain Bin Abdurrahman Ba'lulu Bahanan.	48
32-47	Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmad az-Zabidi	57
48	Abdullah bin al-Haitham	71
49-50	Isa bin Ahmad Ba-Hadrami	73
51	AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad asShibami	75
52-58	Sheikh Muhammad bin AbdurRahman Mazru	77
59-65	Sheikh AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad	83
66-67	Sayyid Isa bin Sayyid Muhammad Alhabshie	90
68-70	Ahmad bin Ali bin Dufah, asShihr	92
71	Abdurrahman bin Abdullah BaRajaa	97

72-74	Ahmad bin Awad Ba Hussain BaAlawi	100
75	AbdulQadir bin Muhammad al-Ahdal	104
76-89	Ahmad bin AbuBakr Ba Syiban Fadhl	109
90	Sheikh Ahmad bin Abdulla Ba Sharahil	120
91-93	Ahmad bin Muhammad Al Ghasham Al Zaidi	123
94-103	Ahmad bin Awad Ba-Hussain BaAlawi	131
104	Abdullah bin Agil bin Sheikh	137
105-106	Ahmad bin Zain Alhabshie Ba-Alawi	140
107	Abdullah bin Muhammad Musawa	143
108-119	Abdullah bin Said bin Uthman al-Amudi	144
120-128	Abdullah bin Muhd bin Uthman al-Amudi	161
129	Sheikh Idris bin Ahmad bin Idris al-Saadi	178
130-140	His Companions, Acquaintants and Others	180
141-144	AbuBakr bin Ali Ibrahim al-Bayti	194
145	Umar bin Abdullah bin al-Afif al-Hajrayni	197
146-150	A Disciple Murid of Knowledge	198
151-156	General Questions to Imam al-Haddad	203
157-160	Umar bin Salim Ba-Humayyid	211
161-164	Sheikh Abdullah ibn Uthman al-Amudi	214

A Short Biography of Imam al-Haddad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

He is Al-Imam Al-Habib Abdullah bin Alawi Bin Muhammad Al-Haddad, the famous Imam, the Shaykh of Islam, the foremost of the people unification, the noble descendant of the Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, a descendant of Al-Imam Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him, the Shaykh Abdullah ibn Alawi Al-Haddad Al-Alawi, may Allah reward him for us with the best rewards He gives those of His people who guide us to Him.

He was born in Subair, a small suburb in Tarim, Hadhramaut, South Yemen, on the night 5 Safar 1044 after Hijrah. Tarim was already a centre of the learned *Asyraf* of the descendant of Saiyidina Hussein bin Ali bin Abu Talib. He grew up in an enlightened environment. He was raised and educated there, initially taught by his father, and was never seen to show the recklessness of other children. He lost his eyesight while still young, and Allah granted the power of discernment as compensation. He gathered as he grew, the best of education and spirituality, and became outstanding in knowledge, guidance, calling people to Allah, and being a shaykh in the perfect sense of the word. He was given the title Pole of Guidance [*Qutbul Irshad*] by the greatest of the people of knowledge in his time and after that until today.

Some have said that there were three ranks in calling to Allah [*dakwa*], according to whether *dakwa* perform by pen, tongue or foot (travelling). All three combined to perfection in the works of Imam Al-Haddad, may Allah shower His mercy upon him. His books are still in print in Egypt, India, Hijaz, Istanbul, and Java. His fame spread throughout the Muslim world, and his writings which were clearly based on the Quran and the practices of the Prophet [*Sunnah*] were never criticised nor thought to be controversial.

His roots from the Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace upon him, from Fatima Az-Zahraa, daughter of Muhammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Gate to (The Radiant) the City of Knowledge, may Allah be pleased with him and all his descendants.

Then on from Al-Imam Hussein > Imam Ali Zainal Abidin > Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir > Imam Jaafar As-Saadiq > Imam Ali Al-Uraidi > Imam Muhammad An-Naqib > Isa Ar-Rumi > Ahmad Al-Muhajir illa Allah > Ubaidillah > Alawi > Muhammad > Alawi > Ali Khali' Qassam > Muhammad of Mirbat > Alawi > Abdur Rahman > Ahmad Al-Faqih > Abdullah > Muhammad > Ahmad > Abu Bakr At-Tawil > Ahmad Al-Haddad > Alawi > Muhammad > Abdullah > Ahmad > Muhammad > Alawi > Abdulla Qutbul Irshad

He earnestly sought knowledge, accompanying such scholars as:

1. al-Habib Umar bin Abdul Rahman Al-Attas
2. al-Habib Oukail bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Syaikh Aideed
4. al-Habib Sahl Bin Ahmed Bahasan Al-Hadeely Baalwi
5. as-Saeed Muhammad Bin Alwi As-Saqqaf

Amongst his students are:

1. His son, our leader al-Habib Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Haddad.
2. al-Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al-Habshee
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Bilfaqeh
4. al-Habib Muhammad bin Zain bin Semait
5. al-Habib Umar bin Zain bin Semait
6. al-Habib Umar bin Abdurrahman Al-Bar
7. al-Habib Ali bin Abdullah bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
8. al-Habib Muhammad bin Umar bin Taha As-Safi As-Saqqaf and many others.

It seems as if he was selected to carry out the mission of *dakwah* for Islam and spiritual guidance using wit and wisdom. People eventually entirely attended to him, and his name has become popular.

People from different fields of life benefited from his books, preaching and guidance. His mission received people's approval and love. His publications have been translated into English, Malay, French and other languages. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 7 *Dzulqaedah* 1132 Hijrah and buried in a simple grave at the graveyard of Zanbal in Tarim. May Allah show mercy on him and reward him abundantly.

His publications are distinctively popular among the old and young then and till now. They include the following:

١. النصائح الدينية والوصايا الإيمانية.

An Nasaih id-Diniyya wal Wasaya al-Imaniyyah.

1. Sincere Religious Advice and Recommendations of the Iman.

٢. الدعوة الشافية والتنبيه العامة.

Ad-Da'watut-Taammah wat-Tadhkiratul 'Aammah.

2. Perfect Summons and General Admonition.

٣. رسالة المعاونة والظهور والمؤازرة للراغبين من المؤمنين في سلوك طريق الآخرة.

Risalatul Mu'awanah wal Muzhaharah wal Mu'azarah Lir-Raagibeen Minal Mu'mineen Fee Suluki Tariq-al-Akhirah.

3. The Book of Assistance, Support and Encouragement for Such Believers as Desire to Follow the Way of the Afterlife.

٤. الفصول العلمية والأصول الحكيمية.

Al-Fusul ul-'Ilmiyyah wal Usul ul-Hikamiyyah.

4. Knowledge and the Principles of Wisdom.

٥. سِيِّلُ الْإِذْكَارِ وَالْإِعْتِبَارِ بِمَا يَمْرُ بِالْإِنْسَانِ وَيُنَقَّضِي لَهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَارِ.
Sabilul-Iddhikaar wal-I'tibaar Bima Yamurru bil-Insan Wa Yanqadhee Lahu Minal A'maar.
5. The Way to Remember and Learn from the Lives of Man that Wane and Perish.
٦. رِسَالَةُ الْمُذَكَّرَةِ مَعَ الْإِخْوَانِ الْمُحِبِّينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْحَيْرِ وَالدِّينِ.
Risalatul Muzhaakarah Ma'al-Ikhwaanil-Muhibbeen Min Ahlil Khayr Waddeen.
6. A Discussion Among Brothers and the Loved Ones From Among the Righteous in Good Deeds and Faith.
٧. رِسَالَةُ آدَابِ سُلُوكِ الْمُرِيدِ.
Risalatu Aadaabi Suluk il-Murid.
7. The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker.
٨. كِتَابُ الْحِكْمَةِ.
Kitaabul Hikam.
8. Book of Wisdom.
٩. النَّقَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ فِي الْمُسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ.
An-Nafaais-il Alawiyyah fil Masaail-as-Sufiyyah.
9. The Gems of the Alawiyya Concerning Sufism.
١٠. إِتْحَافُ السَّائِلِ بِجَوَابِ الْمَسَائِلِ.
Ithaaf is-Saail bi-Jawabil Masaail.
10. The Gifts for the Seeker Being Some Answered Questions.
١١. الْوَصَايَا النَّافِعَةُ.
Al Wasaya an-nafi'ah.
11. Beneficial Religious Counsels.

١٢. وَسِيلَةُ الْعِبَادِ إِلَى رَازِدِ الْمَعَادِ.

Waseelatul 'Ibaad Ilaa Zaadil Ma'aad.

12. A Means for People to Provide for the Hereafter. (A Compilation of the Imam Azkaar and Awraad, including *Wird Latif*, *Wird Kabir*, *Ratib al-Shahir*, *Hizbul-Fath* and *Hizbun-Nasr* by Habib Muhamad bin Alawi Al- Haddad).

١٣. الدُّرُّ الْمَنْظُومُ لِذَوِي الْعُقُولِ وَالْفُهُومِ.

Ad-Durrul Mandhum Li zawil 'Uqul Wal Fuhum.

13. Poetic Pearls for Discerning and Understanding Minds. This book is his *Diwan*, the best of his *Qaseedas*.

١٤. تَبْيَثُ الْفُؤَادُ - بِذِكْرِ كَلْمَ مَجَالِسِ.

Tathbitul fu'ad bizikir kalam majilis.

14. Affirming of the Hearts - with Remembrance of the Speeches at Majlis Volume I and Volume II.

١٥. مُكَاتَبَاتُ الْإِمَامِ الْحَدَادِ.

Mukatibat Al-Imam Al-Haddad.

15. Correspondences of Imam Al-Haddad.

Most of Imam al-Haddad's manuscripts were recompiled by Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader Al-Haddad, who was born in Singapore and educated in Tarim. They were subsequently re-edited, reprinted, translated, and distributed by various inspired parties.

Scholars, as well as the laymen, so highly admired the works that they would read them repeatedly. These scholarly works have also been described as a summary of the quintessence of Scholar Ghazali's literature and eventually indispensable as being brief, but comprehensive.

Author's Preface

(with tributes by his scribe embedded)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

وَبِهِ شَفَّتِي وَبِهِ نَسْتَعِينَ

And in Him I trust, and to Him, I seek.

All praise and thanks belong to Allah, the Only One, the Unique. He is the First, the Last, the Exalted, the Independent, the Designer, the Generous, the Munificent Whose marvellous creations are endless, and Whose gifts flow in streams innumerable.

It is Him that I praise and thank as befits His favours and equals His liberality. And it is Him that I ask for success in pleasing Him and for security under His protection and support.

And I testify that there is no divinity other than Allah, alone, with no partners, testimony such as to place me in the wake of those whose spiritual states are real, whose souls are serene and whose doctrine is correct.

And I testify that our leader Muhammad, the unlettered Prophet, is His servant and messenger, with whom the pure law and straight Path was forth sent and established on their foundations. He is the perfect slave, and he perfects those of his praiseworthy community who emulate him, may Allah bestow upon him blessings and peace as perpetual as time itself, upon his family and companions who are the very treasures of knowledge, the ascending stars, the cavalry spiritual

knights whose assistance is provided in the hardest of times. And may the same blessings and peace be upon all those who follow their guidance, and in their footsteps, who are heirs to their pattern of wisdom, particularly those who, having elevated themselves, attained to lofty ranks, and acquired the realities that are the consequence of emulation, who became known as the Sufi masters, more especially those who are noble by birth as well as by their manifest succession to the said spiritual states, ranks and praiseworthy conduct.

By whom I mean the Husaini *sayyids* of penetrating dignities, dazzling proofs, and prophet Muhammad's behaviour. And in particular see their conclusion, and the light of their eyes, the one whose blessings [*baraka*] envelops the whole world, whose sciences shine through his words to dazzle the mind, the Sheikh of Islam, the heir of Muhammad,¹ immersed in the solicitude of Allah, the Generous and Liberal, our sheikh and our blessing, (Abu Muhammad) Abdullah bin Alawi bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abdullah Al-Haddad Ba-Alawi, the Husaini, the Ash‘ari.

May Allah the Exalted grant us of his spiritual support [*madad*] and prolong it to delight all Muslims and increased the compression of his status [*maqam*] at the highest level, in the duration of this life for indeed everything is possible, Allah the Wise has power over everything.²

O Allah! Bless Your Prophet Muhammad and his descendants and align me with them! Grant me the realization of their knowledge, together with perfect health and safety, until I meet You in the manner that most pleases You, and grant the same to my parents and teachers, O Allah, the Mercy, O Most Merciful.

¹ The hadith stated that the learned, may Allah be please with them, are the heirs to the Prophet, may Allah blessings and peace be upon him.

² The scribe, Abdurrahman Bin Zain Bin Abdurrahman Ba'lulu Bahanan inserted the description of his sheikh held at high esteem in the above two paragraphs.

These are “The Gems Answers to Sufi Questions,” the opinions of our Sheikh, the noble *Sayyid Abdullah Bin Alawi*. He bid me collect them, and he gave them their lofty title. May Allah the Generous accept!¹

We shall now begin²:



¹ Here it must be noted and clarify that then the scribe for Imam al-Haddad was Abdurrahman Bin Zain Bin Abdurrahman Ba'lulu Bahanan, and he completed writing what Imam al-Haddad dictated to him this book on the middle Sunday of *Rabiul Awal* 1147, fifteen years after Imam al-Haddad passed away.

² Imam al-Haddad completed the dictation in *Dhulqaedah*, one of the forbidden months of the year 1125 *Hijriyah*. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 7 *Dzulqaedah* 1132 *Hijrah*.

**Collection of Questions from by the noble
Sayyid of inspiring excellence, AbuBakr
ibn al-Sheikh al-Saqqaf Al-Alawi,**

Question {1}

One of the question Imam al-Haddad was asked by the noble Sayyid of inspiring excellence, AbuBakr, son of Sayyid al-Sheikh al-Saqqaf Al-Alawi, may we benefit from them,

“What do you say of such thoughts as occur to one who has reached Allah the Exalted? Should he reject them and depend solely on thoughts of divine origin or should he do otherwise?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and bestow on him goodness, answered,

“You should know that the one who has arrived to Allah the Exalted is the person who has reached the limit in his knowledge of Allah the Transcendent and Exalted that any person of knowledge can achieve.

Men of this rank differ to an incalculable extent, and they are in either one of two states [*maqam*]: union [*jam*] or separation [*farq*]. When the state of union comes upon one of them, he becomes extinct to himself and others and absorbed in his Lord, to the extent of being annihilated in Him. At such a time no thoughts occur, and nothing that exists is perceived, only the One whose existence is real. Transcendent and Majestic be He!

A man who had realized this state once described it thus:
“If ever a wish for any other than You should cross my mind,
Out of distraction, I would declare myself an apostate.”

Which means, I would declare myself not to be absorbed and annihilated in You. And Allah knows best.

Another has said,
“In my heart, there used to be different passions.
But all passions became one as soon as the eye beheld You.”

Thoughts and their ramifications are the results of worries and the multiplicity of attachments. Those who have reached Allah the Exalted suffer from none of these, for they have united all their anxious desires into only one, which is Allah the Exalted!

It is to the union that this saying of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, refers, **لِي وَقْتٌ لَا يَسْعَنِي فِيهِ إِلَّا رَبِّي**. “I have a time when only my Lord can fill me.”

The perpetuation of the state of the union is extremely rare, but when it is sustained, strange and wondrous things occur. A sheikh in Iraq remained in this state for seven years, he then came to for a brief period, then returned to it for a further seven years. During the whole of that period, he never ate, drank, slept or prayed, but just stood there in the desert gazing at heaven. Another sheikh in Egypt is said to have once made his ritual ablutions [*wudu*], laid down and instructed his deputy not to awaken him, but to let him awake of his own accord. Seventeen years elapsed during which he remained asleep, finally he awoke and stood up for prayers without repeating his ritual ablutions.

Gnostics [*Arifin*] yearn for the union, but the Real, out of compassion, move them out of it, that they may fulfill their obligations, that their bodies may not waste, nor their bones wither away. For when the manifestations of the higher worlds [*waridat*] descend and are powerful and overwhelming they cannot be sustained by human powers; and how could they be so when even Mount Sinai was consumed and reduced to dust when that Light appeared to it?¹

A claim of union is unacceptable from those people who have come under the devil's sway, abandoned acts of worship, neglected such obligations as prayers and fasts, indulged their lustful desires and committed forbidden acts. Had they indeed been saints [*awliya*] of Allah the Exalted, Allah would have protected them from such behaviour, and had they been absorbed in Him, they would have lost awareness of all else.

¹ Surah 7 Al A'raaf Verse 143.

فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّ لِرُبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكَّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى ضَعِيفًا

We should not prolong our discussion of this matter even though it is a vast one where many a foot has slipped, for it is a thing to be experienced and is difficult for the mind, let alone the imagination, to grasp.

As for the state of separation, he who reaches Allah is preserved therein by the eye of divine solicitude. There, only thoughts of Lordly origin occur, which the Sufis call ‘permission’ [*izin*] and thoughts of divine origin, which they call ‘inspiration’ [*ilham*]. Only the Book and Prophetic practices [*Sunna*] take precedence over such thoughts.

As for evil thoughts, they no longer occur, for the ‘Repudiate’ cannot come near the hearts of those who have reached Allah the Exalted and become illumined with the light of gnosis [*ma’rifa*]. Their devils may even become Muslims, an occurrence which falls into the pattern inherited from their Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, for he said,

لِي شَيْطَانٍ، إِلَّا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَ وَتَعَالَى أَعَانَنِي عَلَيْهِ فَأَسْلَمَنَ لَا يَأْمُرُ إِلَّا بِالْخَيْرِ.

“I have a devil¹ but Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, assisted me against him until he became a Muslim and he now enjoins nothing but good.”

Thoughts arising from the soul [*nafs*] are a remote possibility, for the soul of one who has reached Allah is serene in its Lord, has reached His proximity and is conforming and obedient. Called by its Lord, it has answered, so Allah made it join His servants in a “Garden the breadth of which is the heaven and the earth, which was prepared for those who fear Allah.”²

¹ Allah the Exalted attached a devil to all mankind he created.

² Surah 2 ala Imran Verse 133.

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجِئْنَاهُ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous.”

Question (2)

The said *Sayyid Sheikh Al-Saqqaf* also asked him about the sins of the gnostics [*Arifin*].

Imam al-Haddad replied, may Allah be pleased with him and may we be spiritually fulfilled by his answer.

In Sufi terminology, a gnostic [*arif*] is a person who believes in Allah in full awareness, learns about those obligations and prohibitions which Allah has imposed upon him, obeys them, then increasingly performs supererogatory devotions which draw him nearer to Allah. Exalted is He, seeking His proximity, until the lights of good fortune dawn upon him, the unseen becomes to him as the seen and the Real guides him to His path, grants him discernment and teaches him directly of His knowledge [*ilm li dunni*]¹.

It is possible for the gnostic who has reached this degree to commit a sin, and it is possible for him from both the rational and the legal points of view to receive punishment for it. The maximum a gnostic [*arif*] can be is a saint [*wali*], and the maximum for a saint is a guard from sins.

There is no doubt that some of the Prophets, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon them, were indeed blamed for things they had done. So, it was in that which happened to Adam, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and him, when he ate from the tree; to David may Allah's blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and him, when he looked that look and had that thought; and to Solomon may Allah's blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and him, when he felt that inclination, not one atom of which was convened into action. However, the majority of scholars believe that all Prophets, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon them, are immune from both major and minor sins and that those things which some committed were but mistakes and omissions.

¹ Knowledge received directly from Allah, the Exalted.

It is well recognized and confirmed that the good works of the gnostic attract more reward than those of others and are subject to multiplication, and so also their sins for reproaches will be higher and retribution more severe. They may thus receive for a minor misdemeanour the same punishment that others receive for a major one, and that is because they are within the enclosure of divine proximity. Have you not heard Allah, Exalted is He saying

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُنْ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَاعِفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ.

“O Consorts of the Prophet! If any of you were guilty of evident unseemly conduct, the Punishment would be doubled to her. . .”¹

It has reached us that the gnostic ibn al-Jala’ may Allah’s mercy be upon him, once glanced at a handsome beardless youth. and it was said to him, “You will meet with the consequence, even if after some time!”

He later forgot the Quran, which he had memorized.

Another of the gnostic had a sinful thought while praying, and his whole body turned black and remained so until a particular scholar of authority interceded on his behalf.

As for al-Junayd, he saw a poor man begging and said to his self, “Would it not be better for this one to work for his living?” When he rose to his night devotion, he found himself lacking in energy and unable to enjoy them. He was then overcome by sleep and saw that the beggar in question had been brought and laid before him. He was told, “Eat of his flesh for you have slandered him!” He said, “Transcendent is Allah! It was but a thought!” And he was told, “For such a one as you it is not permissible.”

While other gnostics [*arifin*] were punished for actions they committed which were licit [*halal*] but were lacking the courtesy appropriate to their rank.

¹ Surah 33 Al Ahzab Verse 30-31.

Such was what happened to Abu Turab al-Nakhshabi may Allah's mercy be upon him, when he felt a desire for bread and eggs and entered a town to indulge his wish. One of the townsmen took hold of him and cried, "This man was with the thieves!" Thus, it was that he received a painful beating until a man recognized him, took him to his house and there offered him that which had been his desire, at which Abi Turab addressed his soul thus, "Eat! After so many blows!"

Another gnostic's ego overcame him, when he had resolved never to eat fish, reached for it and his hand was penetrated by a fishbone which ruined it.

It has also reached us that Sheikh Abul Ghaith, may Allah's mercy be upon him, once kissed his wife without first forming an appropriate intention and his rank was diminished for a full year.

There are many more such stories but, Allah the Exalted willing, those we have mentioned should suffice to make the point while maintaining our intended brevity.



A Question from the scholar [*ulama*] Sheikh,
AbdurRahman al-Khatib Ba-Raja

Question (3)

The learned scholar [*ulama*] Sheikh, AbdurRahman al-Khatib Ba-Raja, may Allah's mercy be upon him, asked him about those whose status is referred to as the magnetic pivotal universal spiritual leader of the believers [*al-Qutb*]. Whether they are also Reliever [*al-Ghuth*], and those who the believers attached to like Pillars [*al-Awtad*], the devour pious worshippers substitutes [*al-Abdal*] and other men who devoted entirely to Allah the Exalted?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah compensate him with the best of rewards and may we benefit by his answer, answered, "You should know, my brother, that there are many hadiths attributed to the messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, concerning this matter, as well as many statements attributed to Allah the Exalted's elect. I shall confine myself to one hadith and a few of the other sayings."

Al-Yafií may Allah's mercy be upon him wrote in his book "The Meadow of Fragrant Plants" [*Rauth al-Rayahin*] that according to Ibn Masud, may Allah be please with him, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الله تعالى في أرضة ثلاثة قلوبهم على قلب آدم، وأربعون، قلوبهم على قلب موسى،
وله سبعة قلوبهم على قلب إبراهيم، له خمسة، قلوبهم على قلب جبريل، له ثلاثة
قلوبهم على قلب ميكائيل، له واحد قلبه على إسرافيل، على نبينا وعليهم الصلاة
والسلام، فإذا مات الواحد جعل الله تعالى مكانه من الثلاثة وإذا مات من الثلاثة
جعل الله مكانه من الخمسة، وإذا مات من الخمسة جعل الله مكانه من السبعة، وإذا
مات من السبعة جعل الله تعالى مكانه من الأربعين، وإذا مات من الأربعين جعل الله
مكانه من الثلاثمائة، فإذا مات من الثلاثمائة جعل الله مكانه من العامة، بهم يرفع الله
عز وجل البلاء عن هذه الأمة.

“Allah the Exalted has on His earth three hundred whose hearts resemble the heart of Adam, forty whose hearts resemble the heart of Moses, seven whose heart resembles the heart of Abraham, five whose hearts resemble the heart of Gabriel, three whose hearts resemble the heart of Michael and one whose heart resembles the heart of Seraphiel [*Israfil*], may blessings and peace be upon our prophet and them.

Whenever the ‘one’ dies Allah, the Exalted replaces him with one of the three, whose hearts resemble the heart of Michael.

Whenever ‘one of the three’ dies, Allah replaces him with one of the five whose hearts resemble the heart of Gabriel.

Whenever ‘one of the five’ dies, Allah replaces him with one of the seven, whose heart resembles the heart of Abraham.

Whenever ‘one of the seven’ dies, Allah replaces him with one of the forty, whose hearts resemble the heart of Moses.

Whenever ‘one of the forty’ dies, Allah replaces him with one of the three hundred, whose hearts resemble the heart of Adam.

And whenever ‘one of the three hundred’ dies Allah replaces him with one of the ordinary people. It is through them that Allah relieves this community’s afflictions.”

Imam al-Yafi'i may Allah's mercy be upon him, then said, “The one who resembles the heart of Israfil is the Pivot Pole [*Qutb*] {القطب} he is the Reliever [*Ghawth*] {الغوث}. His position and rank among saints [*Awliya*] is the point at the centre of the circle; by him, the good functioning of the world is sustained.”

According to al-Khidr, may Allah's peace be upon him, “Three hundred are the saints [*Awliya*], seventy are the nobles stars [*Nujaba*], forty are the pillars [*Awtad*] of the earth, ten are the captains [*Nuqaba*], seven are the hearts [*Murafa*], three are the chosen ones [*Muhtar*], and one is the *Ghawth*.”

According to Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, may Allah the Exalted's mercy be upon him, the *Abdal* are seven.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Rifai, may Allah the Exalted's mercy be upon him, said that the *Awtad* were four.

And Sheikh Muhammad ibn 'Arabi, may Allah the Exalted's mercy be upon him, said that around the *Qutb* were two men named the two Imams, one on his right looking toward the invisible World [*Malakut*] and the other on his left looking toward the visible world [*Mulk*]. When the *Qutb* dies, he is replaced by the one on his left.

He also said may Allah the Exalted's mercy be upon him, “There are men among the saints [*awliya*] who termed ‘independent individual’ [*Afrad*], who are not under the *Qutb*’s jurisdiction, he may even not be aware of them at all.”

That is possible; however, the statements of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, may Allah the Exalted's mercy be upon him indicate that the *Afrad*, as well as other saints, are all, by the will of Allah, under the *Ghawth*’s authority.

The saints of Allah the Exalted are not confined to these numbers. It has been said that in the days of Sheikh Abdul Qadir, may Allah's mercy be upon him, they numbered twelve thousand.

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ.

“and none can know the forces of your Lord, except He.”¹

As for the *Qutb*, the *Ghawth*, there is one in each time. He is the all-comprehending individual [*Fard*] and is known among the people as the vice-regent [*Khalifa*] and the Perfect Man [*Insan Kamil*]. He is also given the titles of Possessor of the Degree of Supreme Veracity [*Sahibal-Siddiqiyya al-Kubra*] and the Greatest Sainthood [*al-Wilaya al-Uzma*].

Sayyidi 'Abdul Qadir mentioned some of his attributes and inner experiences, may Allah, the Exalted's mercy be upon him, and these were quoted by al-Yafi'i in the last story of “The Book of the Travellers [*Kitab al-Salikin*]” where they can be found.

¹ Surah 74 Al Muddaththir Verse 31.

Poleship [*Qutbaniyya*] is Lordship [*Saiyada*]; this is why the term *Qutb* is used analogically for whoever possesses lordship over the men of a particular spiritual station [*maqam*] or state [*hal*]. There is a ‘Pole of the People of Reliance’ [*Qutb al-mutawakkilin*], ‘Pole of the People of Contentment’ [*Qutb al-Radin*] and so on. The ‘Possessor of the Degree of Supreme Veracity’ is called *al-Qutb al-Ghuth* to prevent any confusion arising from such analogical use of the term *Qutb*.

This explanation should be sufficient on this matter. On scrutiny, the differences among the People [*al-Qaum*] in their descriptions of the titles and numbers of such men, prove to be no more than differences in terminology.

To elaborate further would require us to mention the inner states of the men of the “Circle of Sainthood” [*Da’irat al-Wilaya*], their characteristics, the differences within each rank and other such things, the knowledge of which belongs by right only to the *Qutb*, the *Ghuth* who encompasses all their ranks [*maqam*] and whose status and state [*hal*] comprehend every single one of theirs. As for the other saints, they know about those who are of equal or lesser ranks. They are aware of those above them but have no full knowledge of them.

On the whole, these are questions which can be answered satisfactorily only by contemplation [*mushahada*], and unveiling [*kashf*] and whoever desires this should discipline his soul, reduce its density with the kind of arduous effort that annihilates the soul’s frivolity and conquers its passions and embellish it with constant attentiveness to Allah, the Exalted, courtesy, submissiveness, humility, powerlessness, and poverty in the realization of servitude [*ubudiyya*] and the fulfilling of the rights of Lordship [*Rububiyya*].

Whenever a servant masters these two essential things, effective discipline and perfect presence, the veil over his heart is rent, then he beholds the ‘Unseen of his Lord’ and sees the saints in their ranks and holy functions, as pure spirits. He then no longer needs descriptions and rises from the trough of having to follow others to the peak of contemplation. We, who are veiled, have to make do with mere

descriptions, in this as in other similar matters. However, as long as one does not stop there, these will not be insignificant, for love is their result, and from this love, begins longing, then seeking, and he who seeks finds.

“For every message is a limit of time.”¹

لِكُلِّ تَبَّإِ مُسْتَقْرٌ.

“For each period is a Book, a written degree.”²

لِكُلِّ أَجْلٍ كِتَابٌ.

We summaries it in this manner,

بَصُرْتُ بِرُكْبِ الْحَيِّ لِلْحَيِّ سَائِرًا فَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ مَا حَالُ ذَاتِ الْعَدَائِرِ

I watched the caravan of the tribe as they journey toward the District
So I said to them, “What is the condition of the damsel with hair in
braids adorned and decorated?”

مُحَجَّبَةُ الْحُسْنِ الْبَدِيعُ الَّذِي غَدَا بِمَا كُلَّ صَبَّتْ وَالِهِ الْقُلْبُ حَائِرٌ

The veil dazzling beauty by which every passionate and perplexed
admirer becomes bewildered, and his heart captivated.

أَلَا فَآشِرُ حُوا لِي حُسْنَهَا وَجْمَالَهَا فَأَوْصَافُهَا تَحْلُو لِسَمْعِي وَحَاطِرِي

Indeed! Explain to me her beauty and charming elegance, for indeed
her qualities are pleasant to my ear and mind-highly appreciated.

فَقَالُوا نَرَى فِي ذِكْرِهَا بَعْضُ سُلْوَةٍ لِعَاشِقِهَا دُونَ الشَّهْوُدِ بِنَاظِرِي

They said, “You see in her remembrance some comfort for her ardent
adorers while she's not by the eye seen nor contemplated.

هَلْمَ ثِيدَ السَّيْرَ تَحْوَ خَبَائِهَا لِنَحْظَى بِهَا مَا بَيْنَ تِلْكَ الْمَسَامِيرِ

Come, let us hasten (the journey) towards her tent, so we may gain by
her what was (mentioned) in those nightly chats.

¹ Surah 6 Al Anaam Verse 67.

² Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 38.

فَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ فِي ذِكْرِ أَوْصَافِ حُسْنِهَا تَيَقَّظُ مَحْجُوبٍ وَتَنْشِيطُ سَائِرٍ

So I said to them, “In mentioning her wonderful attributes there is an awakening to those veiled, and energy for those who traveller the path.

رَعَى اللَّهُ أَيَّامًا تَقَضَّى نَعِيْمُهَا وَتَدْكَأُهَا مَا زَالَ نَصْبُ سَرَائِرِي

May Allah preserve the days that its bliss has passed, and the memory remains a monument in my innermost feelings.

خَلِيلِيَّ هَلْ مِنْ عَوْدَةٍ لِلْيَالِي تَوَلَّتْ فَإِتَّيَ بَعْدَهَا عَيْرُ صَابِرٍ

My close friends, is there any way to bring back those nights that have departed, for I find myself, after their departure unable to persevere and my patience utterly negated?

وَسَمِّ بِكَمْ

Collection of Questions from the illuminated Sheikh Abdul Kabir ibn Abdullah Ba-Hamid

Question (4)

The illumined Sheikh Abdul Kabir ibn Abdullah Ba-Hamid asked about the position of someone who mixes with sinful persons, and eats of the food of people whose commercial transactions are unsound, how should one behave toward him?

Imam al-Haddad answered, may Allah be pleased with him, “You should know that no believer who is concern for his religion and his life to come should associate with or keep the company of anyone except the people of goodness and conformity, those who fear Allah, the Exalted and avoid sins whether by steering away from them altogether or by sound repentance if ever they do fall into one.

Further, for the man who associates with those habitual sinners but only as much as necessary and no more, who finds their sins repugnantly, reprobates them and urges them to repent, his faith is secure and safe, no harm will come to him through his association with them. This behaviour may even become recommended if there is hope that they will be influenced by his advice and accept his invitation to turn back to Allah even if after some time.

As for the man who associates with the sinners and does not blame them for their sins while in a position to do so, but neither joins nor assists them in committing sins, he is not free of blame and may well receive his share of anything that befalls them, mainly if his associating with them had not been due to necessity.

Lastly, the man who associates with sinners praise them, approves of their caprices, and perhaps helps them to fulfill their depraved wishes, he is considered by Allah to be worse than the sinners and will be swifter to receive the punishment of Allah, the Exalted and more deserving of His wrath. These considerations relate to those who are persistent sinners, openly display their sinful behaviour and are well known by others to be committing sins.

On the whole, a sane man should avoid mixing with persistent sinners unless they meet by chance, on a social occasion or attending a public place such as a mosque or a market, and this is because associating with them hardens the heart, weakens one's determination in obedience, and drugs one into sin by the influence that Allah the Exalted, in His wisdom, causes to be transmitted between people who like and associate with each other. Those who have experienced these interactions know about them.

As for dealing with and eating the food of someone whose transactions include some that are unsound, or if most of his transactions are sound, and he possesses crops which are genuinely his and the licit in his wealth exceeds the suspect and the illicit, then, as scholars have stated, may Allah have mercy on them, it is permissible to eat of his food and have dealings with him. Circumspection, however, should induce one to avoid such things as much as possible.

وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَعْلَم

And Allah the Exalted knows best.

Question {5}

The above mentioned Sheikh Abdul Kabir also asked about the remedy for one who is slow to acts of goodness, inclined to pleasures [*shahawat*], but is fond of good deeds and good people, and finds evil and evil people repugnant.

Imam al-Haddad answered, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him and with his ancestors.

“You should know that this state of affairs has four causes:

The first is ignorance, and its remedy is the acquisition of knowledge.

The second is a weakness of faith, and it can be strengthened by reflecting on the dominion of the heavens and earth and persevering in good works.

The third is harbouring high hopes. Its remedy is to remember death and be constantly aware that it may pounce on you at any moment.

The fourth is eating suspect [*shubhat*] food. The solution for this is to be circumspect and to consume little amounts, even of that which is halal.

The one who cures himself until he removes all these causes by doing their opposites in the manner that we have just mentioned will become such that he will never tire of his acts of obedience nor ever get bored from any good thing. He would neither be attracted to nor find comfort in passionate desires and temporary pleasures. However, one should not expect this in his initial stages on the path for it is only achieved after much struggle; such is the pattern that

Allah the Exalted has created,

وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسْتَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَأْمُرُ بِأَ

“No change will you find in practice approved of Allah.”¹

Indeed, a man should first of all avoid all transgressions, dissuade himself from passionate desires and strive against inertia and the difficulties of persevering in obedience until he proves the sincerity of his approach to Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, and his desire to reform his heart and straighten his condition. Allah will then look at him and envelop him with His invisible solicitude. He will then find such delight and pleasure as cannot be exceeded in acts of obedience and goodness, and such extreme bitterness and aversion for passionate desires that for these to cross his mind would become unimaginable. That is Allah’s favour which He bestows upon whom He will. Allah, Mighty and Exalted is He, says,

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُّلَنَا.

“And those who strive in Our cause, We will certainly guide them to Our Paths.”²

¹ Surah 33 Al Ahzab Verse 62.

² Surah 29 Al Ankaboot Verse 69.

وَتَمَتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى عَلَىٰ نَبِيِّ إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَرَّبُوا .
The Exalted says, “The fair promise of thy Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because they had patience and constancy.”¹

And the Exalted says,

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَحْلِفُهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ .

“Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, the inheritance of power.”²

Question (6)

The above Sheikh Abdul Kabir also asked, “Which is better for the worshipping servant, is it to conceal or openly display his activities?”

And “Is fear better for him or hope?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah increase favours upon him and bestow upon us some blessings and favour he received, answered,

“You should know that to display one’s divine devotions is better for those who run no risk of becoming showing off and hope that some of their brothers will emulate them. But concealing them is better for those who do fear show off and do not expect anyone to emulate them. Hiding them is also better for those who, being safe from showing off, nevertheless expect no one to follow them, and vice versa.

As for which is preferable, fear or hope, you should know that fear is preferred for those whose ego [*nafs*] is powerful and whose inclination towards sins is high until they become upright. Hope, on the other hand, is preferable for those on the verge of death, so that they may die thinking well of Allah the Exalted.

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 137

² Surah 24 An Noor Verse 55.

As for those possessed of good health and firm adhesion to religion, it is better to have equal shares of fear and hope so that they may be as the two wings of a bird, well balance.”

Question {7}

The same Sheikh also asked, “Which is better, recite the Quran, glorifying Allah [*Tasbih*] or firming the Oneness of Allah [*Tahlil*] for a man wishing to have an arrangement of supplication [*wird*]?”

Imam al-Haddad answered, “As for your question regarding which of the Quran, *tahlil* or *tasbih*, would be more commendable for someone wishing to have a *wird*; you should know that nothing is better than reciting the Quran with presence, reflection and the appropriate intonation. However, base on the human nature falling to boredom and weariness, one should, therefore, shift from one selection of *wird* to another, recite the Quran for a while, pray for a while, reflect about death and what follows it, then move on to other kinds of worshipping activities.”

Question {8}

The Sheikh Abdul Kabir also asked, “Is it better to prolong one’s standing during the ritual prayer, bowing [*rukuk*], and prostrations [*sujud*] or to shorten them to be able to increase the number of supererogatory [*nawafil*] prayers?

Imam al-Haddad answered, “As for which is preferable, to prolong one’s standing, bowing [*rukuk*], and prostrations [*sujud*] or shorten them to increase the number of cycles [*rakaats*] during supererogatory [*nawafil*] devotions; you should know that what has been handed down concerning the standard actions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, during his night vigils, is that he prolonged his standing, bowing and prostrations to great lengths but did not exceed eleven or thirteen *rakaats*.

Scholars, may Allah the Exalted have mercy be on them, have differed regarding which is better, to prolong one's standing or *rukuk* or *sujud*? Some have advocated the first, others the second. Imam al-Ghazali and others are of the opinion that that which brings on more awe [*khushu*] and presence [*hadr*] is preferable and that this is bound to change with the changes in the worshipper's inner states [*hal*]."

Question (9)

The above Sheikh also related to Imam al-Haddad about what happened to him, once he heard a person speaks about a horse and how it needed discipline and a guide, so he had applied these things to himself. And, on another occasion, he heard someone speak of spring and the preparation and care that the land needed before and after the rainfalls, he had applied these things to his heart. He then asked the Imam whether these manners of understanding were sound or not?"

"He also asked Imam al-Haddad about a dream, the details of which will become clear from the answer."

Imam al-Haddad responded, "As for the thoughts that you say come to you at night as well as at other times, know that reflection has a significant share in the reformation and rectitude [*yaqin*] of the heart and in bringing to life good intentions and acts. However, not every kind of thinking, of course, but a reflection on the manifest signs of Allah the Exalted, the visible marvels of His creation, the multiplicity of His gifts and favours, that which He has promised honour His friends within the abode of reward and that which He has threatened to humiliate His foes within the abode of punishment. Also included are reflection on the world's vanishing, chaotic conditions, multiple of troubles and numerous kinds of foulness.

And as for thinking of the passionate desires and pleasures toward which the ego is attracted, if it is from the point of view that they are upsetting, troubling, temporary and driven by Allah towards His foes and away from those He loves, this is beneficial thinking.

But if it is from the point of view of their being well suited to the ego, conforming to one's nature, comforting and pleasurable, to the extent of envying those who have access to them, as occurs with those whose hearts became neglect and unaware of their Lord, then this kind of thinking is not permissible; it is ugly and reprehensible since it stimulates desire and greed for worldly things, and the effort to acquire and accumulate them.

About you hearing someone speaks of a horse and its need for discipline and teaching, and your application of that to yourself and need for one of the men of Allah, the Exalted, to discipline and teach you good manners with his words and deeds.

Just like that which you heard about springtime when the land needs preparation and care before and after the rainfalls, and your application of that to your heart and its need, when the rains of wisdom fall on it, for preparation and care from the sheikhs through their solicitude and discipline.

All the above is ‘righteous path hearing’ [*sama' mustaqim*], and it is enlightened understanding. The People of the Right Path, may Allah be pleased with them, call this hearing “pure or absolute hearing” [*sama' mutlaq*] which means that whatever is heard is taken to apply to that in which one is currently engaged in his travelling along the path. And his effort to conform to the Supreme Assembly, each according to his state [*hal*] and station [*maqam*]. However, they stipulate, as a condition, that this happens suddenly and spontaneously without prior thinking of affectation. There are many well-known stories regarding this.

For example, the story about three of them who once heard a man calling: ‘[پاسعر بري] Wild Theme!’ at which they became ecstatic and lost awareness of their physical environment.

When subsequently questioned about what they hear, the first man replied, “I heard the Real (Allah) addressing me thus, [إِنْسَعْ تَرْ بِرِي!] ‘Strive and you shall see My beneficence!’” The second man said, “I

heard, ‘How vast is My beneficence! [ما أوسع بِرٍّي!]. And the third man said, “I heard, “Now you will see My beneficence! [السَّاعَةُ تَرَى بِرٍّي!]. So, you see, may Allah, the Exalted, have mercy on you, how they missed the essence of what was said and how, from each Presence, they received such a majestic address!

As for that which you saw in your dream, that you were reading the book “the Knowledge Spinoff” [Awarif Maarifah]¹ of Suhrawardi before a respectable gentleman [sharif]. And that you know the man does no such acts of worships, this should be taken to mean that something good relating to this path, the path of the Sufis, will come to you from whence you expect it not, Allah, the Exalted willing.

And as for that writing which you saw in the other dream on the hand of a man not known for his rectitude [istiqama] and which included the mention of mercy and the name of Joseph (Yusuf).

Its interpretation is that mercy will come to that man and its manner will be either that people will accuse him of something he is innocent of, or that he will forgive someone who has injured him, or some other such thing similar to what happened to Prophet of Allah the Exalted, Joseph, may Allah’s peace be upon him.

The important thing is that the dream is authentic and free from the enticements of the ego and the insinuations of the devil [syaitan].

At the very least the dreamer’s tongue should be truthful in his waking state and his heart and head free from corrupt imaginations and from talking of things which are remote from the truth.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and his family said,

الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ جُزْءٌ مِّنْ سِتَّةٍ وَأَرْبَعِينَ جُزْءًا مِّنَ النُّبُوَّةِ

“A Sound dream is one of forty-six parts of Prophethood.”



¹ By Imam Shihabuddin Omar Suhrawardi, died in 632 AH, focused on the truth of Sufism, discusses Sufi ideas and deals with the conditions of Sufis.

A Conclusion on Repentance

وقد وقع التعرض بذكرها في المكتوب

Which discourse led up to by what that has just been said.

You should know that repentance is that wide-open door of Allah the Exalted and Grace of His, Transcendent is He, which He bestows on those who approach Him. It means that man should act in everything that Allah loves and refrain from committing and find them repugnant all sins and prohibition. And that one is to engage in everything that Allah wants him to do and would dislike him to neglect, such as obligatory [fardu] acts and duties [wajibat].

The one who neglects any of his obligations or falls into doing something prohibited then wishes to repent should refrain from the prohibited act and perform the neglected duty. The servant should experience remorse for his shortcomings and resolve never to behave in such a manner again for the rest of his life.

The one who repents and then repeats his act will not thereby invalidate his previous repentance. Still, he should repent again, and this is part of the grace that Allah bestow upon us and all humanity, so let Him be praised and thanked, we shall never praise Him enough; He is as He has praised Himself. According to a hadith,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ لِيَتُوَبَ مُسِيءُ النَّهَارِ، وَيَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِيَتُوَبَ مُسِيءُ اللَّيْلِ، وَإِنْ قِيلَ الْمَعْرِبُ بَابًا مُسَيِّرٍ الشَّمْسُ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا مُفْتُوحًا لِلتُّوبَةِ لَا يُغْلِقُ، حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا.

“Allah the Exalted extends His Hand at night so that those who sin during the day may repent and He extends His Hand during the day so that those who sin during the night may repent. And there is a gate in the West, as wide as the distance travelled by the sun in forty days, which remains open for repentance and is never shut until the day the sun rises from whence it now set.”

إِنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يُغْرِغْرِ.

“And Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, accepts His servant’s repentance as long as the latter is not gasping.”

Gasping means that he is dying, his spirit has reached his throat and he is in his last few breaths.

You are now aware of the rules of repentance and its status in religion. It remains to be said that anyone who has done another man an injustice must return what he has appropriated if it is money or surrender himself for legal retaliation or ask for pardon if the offence was against someone’s life or honour. If this proves to be impossible, then he must do whatever part of it he can. It is to be hoped that by Allah’s grace, his adversaries will forgive him in the life-to-come.

If he has neglected any of his obligations, such as ritual prayers, fasts or zakat, the repentant must perform all that he has neglected, and this cannot be avoided but is done at some leisure and as one’s circumstances allow, with neither too much constraint nor too much indulgence, for this religion is resilient.

The Prophet has said may blessings and peace be upon him,
بُعْثُتْ بِالْحَيْفِيَّةِ السَّمَحةِ.

“I was sent with a good sense of tolerant.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْقِرُوا.

“Make it easy; do not make it difficult. Give good tidings and do not cause aversion.”

It has reached us that one of our virtuous predecessors persisted for a long time in asking Allah the Exalted to grant him a sincere repentance [*taubatan nasuha*], without perceiving any sign that he was being answered, he became perplexed. Until he saw in his dream that Allah said to him, “I consider what you request is easy? Inevitably what you ask Allah, the Exalted for Him to answer you is easy.

Did you not hear what the Exalted says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him to repent repeatedly, and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.”¹

تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَيْكُمْ تَوْبَةً نَصُوْحًا فِي خَيْرٍ وَعَافِيَةً، وَتَوْفَانَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

May Allah grant us and you sincere repentance, in a goodly state and well-being, and may He take us to Him in such a state!

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 222.

Collection of Questions from the illumined Sheikh, Muhammad ibn Ahmad Sal'aan,

Question (10)

The illumined Sheikh, Muhammad ibn Ahmad Sal'aan, asked the Imam al-Haddad about the sayings of the gnostic [*arif billah*] Sheikh, Abi Yazid al-Bistami, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him and may we benefit from him, “The farthest creation from Allah the Exalted most of whom are those who refer to Him frequently.”

Imam al-Haddad replied, may Allah's the Exalted, mercy be upon him and may we benefit from him, “If the Sheikh meant by the ‘farthest creation’ to be humankind, it would be because for them to frequently refer to Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, by saying, “This is Allah” and “From Allah” or any other similar sayings, would indicate ostentation and imitating the elite to appear equal to them. Such people, undoubtedly, are farther away from Allah, the Exalted than the others.

And if the Sheikh, may Allah's mercy be upon him, in his saying “creation” refers explicitly to the elite among gnostics, and this is a common usage of the word in the language. It would mean that the gnostic who frequently refers to Allah the Exalted is farther away from the Divine Presence than other gnostics because reference can only be made at a distance and in the absence of contemplation.

Question (11)

The person mentioned above also asked about the saying, “The soul addressed the heart thus: “Be with me in ordinary activities so that I can be with you in devotional activities.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and may we benefit from him, answered, “This is the ‘serene soul’ addressing the enlightened heart. When the heart is present with it in its necessary

Ordinary activities such as eating, drinking and so on, the soul achieves rectitude [*yaqin*] in carrying out those activities, through this presence, always choosing the best alternative.

And when the soul is present with the heart in divine religious activities, it supplies it with energy and is a sign that both the inward and the outward aspects have joined forces.”

“When the inward is with the outward in its activities and the outward with the inward in its transformation, they are in perfect unison for the achievement of spiritual goals.”

Question (12)

The same sheikh also asked about whether the sheikh (the guiding teacher) should be loved for himself, his qualities or the comfort that he provides?

Imam al-Haddad answered, “You should know that to love someone for the excellence and beauty of his qualities is a rational love, and so is also to love him for the benefits obtained from him, whether these be worldly or religious. The first kind is more noble and beneficial.”

“To love someone for himself is conceivable only in the case of the Real, Eminent and Majestic is He. It is subtle and mysterious and poses a problem for other than the people of insight. There is absolutely nothing that should be loved for itself except Allah the Exalted.”

“As for it was said about the members of the house of Prophethood whose behaviour was mixed, ‘We detest their attributes but not their selves,’ this is because their physical selves descend from the Prophet, and this is not the same as what we have said above.”

Question (13)

And the above person also asked about the saying of the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, in his invocation [*dua*] for Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with them,

اللَّهُمَّ فَقِّهْنِي فِي الدِّينِ وَعَلِّمْنِي التَّأْوِيلَ.

“O our Lord, grant him the understanding of religion and teach him the interpretation.”

Imam al-Haddad answered, “To understand religion is to understand its sciences and inquire into the wisdom and secrets within them so that the practice of religion becomes based on understanding and insight.”

“As for the science of interpretation, it is the interpretation of the Quran and Prophetic practices [*Sunna*]. Ibn Abbas may Allah be pleased with them was the ultimate in that field, he was called the ‘Interpreter of the Quran’, and this was because of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, invoke for him. We may use the same above invocation prayer [*dua*] and may add to it the below,”

وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ هِيَ الْطَّرِيقُ الْمُوَصَّلَةُ رَضْوَانَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَجْهَتُهُ مَعَ الْيُسْرِ وَالْعَافِيَةِ.

“And (O Lord), guide us to the even path¹, which is the way to the good pleasure of Allah the Exalted and to His Garden, in a manner that is easy and good wellbeing.”

“So, let all who utter this prayer, mean by it that which we have just mentioned, that is, the understanding of religion, the science of interpretation, and guidance to and along the path. Then, when Allah the Exalted answers them, they will be granted that which is most suitable and profitable to them and had been decreed for them.”

¹ Surah 28 al Qasas Verse 22.

Question (14)

The above person also asked about the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, comments about Allah the Exalted saying (in a hadith Qudsi),

مَنْ شَغَلَهُ ذِكْرِي عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِي أَعْظَمُهُ أَفْضَلَ مَا أَعْطَيَ السَّائِلَيْنَ.

“Those who are too busy with the remembrance of Me to ask Me for anything I shall give them better than that which I give those who ask.”

Imam al-Haddad answered, “It appears to me that it refers to the ones whose state [hal] is too absorbed in remembrance, dissolved in it, losing all restraint, and making remembrance their sole occupation and habit. When such people do not make an invocation prayer [dua] much during this period, they miss nothing of that which those who invoke pray [dua] abundantly receive.

On the contrary, they receive more than those who ask since they are occupied with Allah the Exalted and His remembrance and not with others or with their share of the world.

I see no justification for a man whose state [hal] is such that his remembrance causes him to abandon his invocation prayers [dua] for invocation [zikr].

I do not believe this to be good, and cannot say that this is the intention behind the hadith, for an invocation prayer [dua] are also remembrance and in them are neediness for Allah the Exalted and awe [khusuk] and humility before Allah that is not lacking in other devotions, and this is why it was said that,

الدُّعَاءُ مُحْمَّدُ الْعَبَادَةِ

“An invocation prayer [dua] is the marrow of worship?”



Collection of Questions from Sheikh Abdullah Ba-Sa'id al-'Amudi

Question (15)

Sheikh Abdullah Ba-Sa'id al-'Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad about what the great Sheikh Said ibn Isa, may Allah be pleased with him said, "A sheikh is not a sheikh until he knows the principles of religion [usul udin] and their applications [furuq]." After which, he added, "The principles are seven and the applications seventy."

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and make us benefit from him, answered, "You should know that this statement of the sheikh is accurate and authoritative. As for his saying, "until he knows the principles of religion and their applications," it means that the sheikh who calls on others [*dakwa*] to Allah must possess the knowledge of the principles and the applications of religion either in sum or in detail, either by acquisition and learning or by way of grace and inspiration. The latter was indeed the case of Sheikh Sa'id, for he was illiterate, as were several other sheikhs such as Sheikh Ahmad al-Sayyad, Ali al-Ahdal, Abul-Ghaith, and others, may Allah have mercy on them.

As for the sheikh's statement that the principles are seven and the applications seventy, it cannot be analyzed with any accuracy, for the sheikh may have had in mind some inner meanings which would constitute principles and applications in the manner stated. As someone once said, "A sheikh must have firmly established the practice of obligations and supererogation [*nawafil*]." Then added, "The obligation is to love the Lord, and the supererogation is to renounce the world."

The gist of what the sheikh said is that a sheikh must possess religious knowledge, both inward and outward to perfection. It has been said, "Allah never took an ignorant man unto Himself, for when He takes the person, He teaches him."

Question (16)

The same above sheikh also asked about the saints of the circles, their numbers and other things which will appear from the answer.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and provide us with spiritual support [madad] through him answered, “Some of these things were mentioned by the Sheikh the Imam Abdullah bin Asad al-Yafii at the beginning of his book “*Rawd al-Rayahin*”¹, so look them up there. We have been asked about this matter and have answered in one of our treatises.

As for the first ever to be established in the degree of Poleship [*Qutbaniyya*], it has been said that it was al-Hasan, son of ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with them. It has also been told that it was Abu-Bakr may Allah be pleased with him, then the Caliphs in the order they came, then al-Hasan, al-Husain and Ali Zainal Abidin, and this is what has been said.

As for the last to be established in it, it is the Mahdi al-Fatimi, may peace be upon him, whose coming is at the end of time. The Pole is the best among the faithful of the time. The rest of what you inquire about is also mentioned in “*Raud al-Rayahin*” in a general way. To detail, such a matter requires much elaboration and some of that knowledge is of the kind that it is not permissible to put into books.”

Question (17)

And Sheikh Al Amudi also asked about a particular person’s statement that the denial of the miracle [*Karamat*] of the saints amounted to disbelief [*kufr*] when most scholars have already decided that it is to be considered an innovation [*bidaa*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and may through his righteousness we clear our hearts of any transgressions,

¹ The book is titled *Raud al Riyahin fi Hikayat alSalihin* by Sheikh Abdullah bin Asad al-Yafii al-Yamani (deceased 768H)

answered, “We go by what the scholars have said concerning this matter. The statement quoted in ‘*Lataif al-Minan*’¹ and attributed to Sheikh Abu-Turab al-Nakhshabi, may Allah have mercy on him, is to be interpreted as meaning a kind of disbelief short of total disbelief or to apply to those who deny the possibility of their occurrence as a matter of Divine Ability or from any other point of view.

As for general miracle [*karamat*] being the same as Prophetic miracle [*mujizat*], this is only by their being secondary to them, not in themselves; they are not the same and are in most respects dissimilar. A *mujizat* is proof of the Messenger’s veracity. In contrast, a *karama* from a saint [*wali*] who firmly upholds the Law, is a proof of the excellence of his following his Prophet and the truth of his religion. Thus the saying stated that each saint’s *karama* is but a *mujizat* of the Prophet whom he follows. Significant is the difference between a *karama* and a *mujizat*, so do understand!

Question {18}

The same Al-Amudi also asked about the interrogation of people in their graves; do both angels carry out the interrogation or only one? In which language is it done? Are they two or three? Do they metamorphose and change form according to the dead person’s state?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be please with him, answered, “As for the two angels’ interrogation it is true, real and beyond doubt. Everything else is unnecessary once there is certainty [*yaqin*] concerning the reality of the interrogation. There are a few weak hadiths relating to your questions, but the important thing is to believe in the two angels’ interrogation. The traditionist, al-Suyuti, may Allah have mercy on him, quotes in his book ‘Discourse in the conditions of the people of Graves’ [*Sharh al-Sudur fi Ahwal Ahla al-Qubur*]² what should be sufficient concerning this matter and you may read it if you wish.”

¹ A book by Sheikh ibn Ata illah of Alexandria Egypt.

² Imam Sayuti book about the life in the Intermediary Realm [*Barzakh*].

Question (19)

The Sheikh Al-Amudi also asked, “Is the Garden in the heavens and the fire in the seventh earth? In which state will the earth and the heavens be on the Day of Rising, will they be altered, or will Allah create different ones? How many degrees are there in the Garden and how many Gardens? What is it that enables the believers to see Allah, Majestic and High is He, in the hereafter?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him, and we benefit from him, and all Muslim with his blessings, answered, “You should know, may Allah, the Exalted, grant you success and make you of those whose inner eye is enlightened and perceives by the light of Allah the Exalted, that this knowledge was handed down both in sum and in detail. However, even when detailed much remains implicit, human minds are incapable of bearing it otherwise. It is enough for a man to have faith with certainty according to the text of the Book and *Sunna*.

As for the Garden, the apparent meaning of the Quran is that it is in heaven and it has many degrees, one hundred in some versions, while others state that they are as many as the verses in the Quran, which exceed six thousand. There are eight Gardens, and each contains many gardens. The uppermost is the Highest Firdaus, and it has as its roof the Throne of the Merciful, Blessed and Exalted is He!

Inhabitants of the Garden are the Prophets, the Messengers, the righteous servants of Allah among the believers and the Muslims. Their degrees therein vary according to their faith and their deeds, some are finer than others, and some are higher than others, but none are low or base.

As for the strength to see Allah the Exalted in the Garden, Allah will give them of His strength and will fashion them at the resurrection in a way capable of sustaining it. These will be spirits and bodies to subsist, not liable to suffer from weaknesses or undergo the changes which ephemeral things are subjected. In this manner will they be strong enough.

As for the earth and heavens on the Day of Rising, it is understood that they will change and metamorphose, both being included in Allah's decree, Glory belongs to Him, of the annihilation of both the physical and subtle worlds.

This is indicated by His saying, Exalted is He,

يَوْمَ تُبَدِّلُ الْأَرْضُ عَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَّزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ.

“The day the earth will be changed to a different earth, and so will be the heavens, and men will be marshalled forth, before Allah, the One, the Irresistible;”¹

And the Exalted saying,

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ.

“When the sky is rent asunder, and it becomes red like ointment.”²

Then, they will be recreated as the previous heaven and earth but having been demolished and changed from one state [*hal*] into another, as will also happen to the children of Adam, may Allah's blessings and peace be our Prophet and upon him, and the other creatures and this is what can be understood.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِحَقِيقَةِ الْحَالِ

And Allah knows best what the truth of the matter is.

As for the Fire, may Allah the Exalted protect us all from it, it was said that it was now under the seventh earth and, also that it was under the seas. It consists of tiers which number seven. The uppermost is *Jahannam*; it is for the sinners among the people of Unification [*al-Muwahidin*]. The lowermost is *al-Haawiya*, that which has no bottom and no fathomable depth.

On the Day of Rising the Sovereign Requiter will appear and judge His creatures. The Throne of the Merciful will be brought forth, then the Garden will be brought forth to its right and the Fire to its left,

¹ Surah 14 Ibrahim Verse 48.

² Surah 55 ar Rahman Verse 37.

then every creature shall be summoned for the final judgment. Some will end up in the Garden and some in the Fire.

وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

“The Decision between them will be in perfect justice, and the cry on all sides will be, ‘Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!’”¹

The Book and the Sunna contain much detail on the subject, so search and meditate on it and take a firm hold of the summary which we have given you, for it contains the essence of what is required from the text of the Quranic verses and Prophetic hadith.

وَمَن يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ

“And whoever believes in Allah, Allah guides his heart aright.”²

مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي

Whoever Allah guides, he is on the rightly guided path.³



¹ Surah 39 Az Zumar Verse 75.

² Surah 64 Al Taghaabun Verse 11.

³ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 178.

Collections of Questions from the Imam al-Haddad's scribe, Abdurrahman Bin Zain Bin Abdurrahman Ba'lulu Bahanan.

Question {20}

I asked Imam al-Haddad, may Allah benefit us from him, about being ‘all Altruism’ (preferring others to oneself), does it include both the things of this world and those of the next or is it confined to worldly matters involving the soul’s wishes and desires?

Imam al-Haddad answered me, “You should know that to prefer others to oneself in worldly matters, and its passions is a great virtue, and this was the custom of our virtuous predecessors and those who emulated and succeeded them. Many unique stories exist to that effect. Imam al-Ghazali may Allah benefit us from him and be pleased with him, mentioned some of these, in the chapter on “Disapproving Wealth” in the ‘*Ihya*’, and others also did this.

As for preferring others to oneself in Afterlife matters such as religious practices, we know of no good opinions to that effect. For this would indicate a lack of desire to draw nearer to Allah the Exalted and attain His good pleasure, and these are things which one should hasten to and jostle for and compete.

There are a few stories of people affiliated to Sufism [*tasawuf*], and in spiritual states [*hal*] which seem to indicate something of the kind, however, a divine religious state should be conceded to its man, provided it is sincere, but not emulated.

There are also certain kinds of devotions which are perilous, and some people are more suited to these than others, some hold back because of the dangers involved and leave them to others who are more able to perform them. Examples of such activities are leading the ritual prayers, leading a nation, giving legal opinions, teaching religious knowledge, and so on.

But if you observe the states [*hal*] of those who give precedence to others in such matters, you will find that the reason

behind it is still their attempt to seek the proximity of Allah the Exalted and avoid His wrath, which they may become exposed to should they present themselves to these dangers or to any other thing which may threaten their religion.”

Question {21}

I (Bahanan) also asked about the times for the morning and evening invocations.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be pleased with him and let us benefit from him answered, “As for morning and evening, they say that evening begins when the sun is at its zenith and morning after midnight or the last third of the night. As for the invocations specific to these times, the evening ones are better recited when the night is near, for instance, the time when the sun turns yellow, and at the beginning of the night; and the morning ones from before dawn until sunrise, and this is how we perform this noble remembrance [wird].

Question {22}

And I asked about ‘rubbing’ one’s body after reciting certain protective verses of the Quran and blowing into one’s palms at bedtime as the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him is reported to have done; should one rub the whole body even at the cost of some discomfort?

For the hadith stated,

“That which he can reach of his body.”

وَمَا اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْ جَسَدِهِ

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be please with him and let us benefit from him, answered, “If a man recites and blows into his palms then passes his hands over his body he should, therefore, rub those parts he can reach beginning with his head and face, then the front of his body.”

Question (23)

And I (Bahanan) asked about the meaning of ‘travelling’ to Allah the Exalted

﴿السَّيْرُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى﴾

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and let us benefit from him, answered me, “You should know that travelling with both the body and the heart is by purifying the soul and the senses from reprehensible attributes, behaviour and deeds. Then adorning them with excellent characteristics and behaviour, and this is how the servant draws nearer to the Presence of Allah the Exalted, and nearness is that of the heart. The purer and better he becomes the closer he will draw.

There is another kind of travelling to Allah the Exalted which subtler and finer but unsuitable to be mentioned except to those who are done or nearly so with the first kind.”

Question (24)

And I asked about the statement of certain people of the path that one should not talk about spiritual states [*hal*] and stations [*maqam*] if one has yet to reach them.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him answered, “This is so, and it applies more particularly to the disciple [*murid*] who is travelling the path but is yet to realize those states [*hal*] and stations [*maqam*]; his talking or inquiring about them may result in a certain amount of affectation, self-admiration, showing off or other similar things which hinder and confuse the traveller. Therefore, they will only permit him to inquire about the stations [*maqam*] and states [*hal*] he is currently experiencing if they cause him confusion. He is then permitted to consult his sheikh if this is possible, if not then any other man of the path, or if it so happens that none is at hand, then consult their books. These are the general rules concerning this matter.”

Question (25)

And I (Bahanan) also asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, “What should one do who is standing before Allah, Majestic and High is He, either in ritual prayer or in a similar situation, and fears that were he to allow himself to be fully aware of the Divine Presence he would either experience such awe [*tadzim*] that his prayer would be disrupted or, should thoughts of limitation or attribute human traits, emotions, or intentions to Allah occur to him in that Presence, be guilty of courtesy?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered me, “The one who is anxious about the first situation should allow into his awareness only as much as his heart can sustain, after which if he does lose control he will be excused.

As for the second situation, he should make himself aware that Allah Exalted is He, sees his outward, surrounds him wherever he is and knows his inward, and he should never think or try to feel that he sees Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He. Then, Allah wills [*Insya Allah*], one would thus be safe from imagining that Allah has a form or bears any resemblance to anything, and this applies to those whose knowledge of Allah, Majesty and Holiness, is feeble, the knowledge meant here being that of direct experience and contemplation, not that of belief and reflection.

Question (26)

And I (Bahanan) also asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, about the blameworthy desire of the disciple [*murid*] for a miracle [*karamat*] and unveilings [*mukashafa*] in the manner mentioned in the “Treatise of the Disciple¹.”

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be please with him, answered me, “This is blameworthy because it may lead to one’s

¹ The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker.

رسالة آداب شلوك المريد.

zeal and perseverance in worship becoming solely for that purpose; one would thus join the company of those who are pursuing worldly things and passions, and this applies to those who seek outward miracle [*karamat*]¹ such as the folding up of distances, speaking of hidden things, and so on. As for those who seek true miracles² [*karamat*] such as increased faith [*iman*] and certitude [*yaqin*], the realization of the relinquishment of all desire for the world [*zuhud*], the aspiration for the hereafter and other such issues, these are praiseworthy for they are part of religion and the truth which should be aspired for and pursued.”

Question (27)

And I (Bahanan) also asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, about the statement of Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, in the chapter on thankfulness in the ‘*Ihya*’ that the Angels of Proximity are more thankful to Allah the Exalted than the Prophets, and upon them be blessings and peace, and above similar statements implying that the angels are more superior to the Prophets.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered me, “You should know that this is the opinion of the *Ahlul Sunna* and it was said that Imam Al-Ghazali was one of them. However, the majority hold a different view.

In my opinion, the works of Imam Al-Ghazali, may Allah’s mercy be on him, in this and other similar passages express the belief that the angels are indeed superior but only in certain respects, and with this, I concur. I cannot allow myself to speak of this because it belongs to the Divine Mysteries. The opinion to be trusted is that of the majority of the *Ahlu al Sunna*, which is also the opinion of Imam al-Ghazali, as can be seen from other relevant passages.

¹ *Karamah* Dignity or honor bestowed by Allah to His saints [*wali*]. A believer should seek steadfastness [*istiqamah*] instead of seeking miracle [*Karamah*]. Allah the Almighty may bestow Karamah by Allah even if he does not seek it.

² Miracle bestowed by the Almighty on the Prophets are called *Mukjizat*.

Question (28)

And I (Bahanan) also asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, about the use of invocations and prayers containing non-Arabic words by those who do not know their meaning and about using the invocation,¹

Ya-Hoo! Ya-Hoo!

يَا هُوَ يَا هُوَ

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered me, “We have already mentioned verbally to you that when these actions are found in the prayers of those who are both authoritative [*muhaqiqin*] scholars as well as gnostics [*arifin*] and who join knowledge [*ilm*] to certitude [*yaqin*], such as Imam al-Ghazali, Sheikh al-Suhrawardi, Sheikh Abul-Hasan al-Shadhili and their like, may Allah be pleased with them and spread their benefit to us, there is no harm for the invoker and the supplicant to use them. They would thus be following those who are worthy of being trusted and followed.

On the other hand, if such words are used by those who do not fit this description, one should refrain from using them until their meaning becomes known, for they may contain meanings which belong to disbelief or border on it as mentioned by some authoritative scholars.

As for remembrance using ‘*Ya-Hoo Ya-Hoo*’, it should be confined to those whose state is total absorption, as stated by Sheikh Zarruq, may Allah mercy be on him, unless one comes across them in the litanies [*hizb*] of the people of realization [*ahlul tahaqiqi*], in which case one would be following them and not subject to innovation.

Question (29)

And I (Bahanan) asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, about the meaning of the words of the sheikh the *Qutb*, Sayyid Abi Bakr son of the supreme *Ghawth* our leader Abdullah ibn Abi-Bakr al-Aydarus ‘Alawi, may Allah be pleased with them and let us benefit

¹ This phrase is in place of *Ya Allah Ya Allah* .

from them, “The lover is drunk, yet in him, there is no drunkenness,” up to the verse that says, “Allah does what He wills, whether of possible or impossible.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be please with him, answered me, “It seems that your perplexity arises from his saying. “or impossible,” seeing that it has been agreed among theologians that the impossible is that which cannot be conceived to exist.

The meaning that appears to us in the words of the Sheikh is that should the Divine Will directed at an impossibility it would bring it into existence. The irresistible Ability would not be powerless before it. However, Divine Will never aims at the impossibility.

The Sheikh, may Allah’s mercy be on him, made this clear when he said, “Allah Exalted is He, does what He wills.” When He wills, He does, but He never wills impossibility; therefore, it can never be. In the same vein should one understand the verse that states,

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَا صُطْفَىٰ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْغَهَّابُ .
“Had Allah wished to take to a son for Himself, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those whom He does create, but Glory be to Him! (He is above such things.) He is Allah, the One, the Irresistible.”¹
A son is impossible for Him; therefore, He never wills it.

There is another possible meaning for the Sheikh’s words which is that he means here by the ‘impossible’ those events which are possible but thought to be improbable. It is sometimes done in the Arabic language to Call such events impossible; people describe strange things; thus, “This is impossible!” and “That is impossible?” Such use of the word is acceptable among Arabs and in-line with other metaphorical expressions.

There is a third meaning to the Sheikh, may Allah have mercy on him, words. Still, it cannot be divulged except by Divine permission and then only to those worthy of it, for it requires subtle understanding

¹ Surah 39 az-Zumar Verse 4.

and most minds would fail to grasp it, and this is what we have understood from the Sheikh words, may Allah spread his benefit!

Question (30)

And I (Bahanan) asked the Imam, may Allah benefit us from him, about the meaning of the what our master the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah bestow honour upon him, and Allah be please with him, and allow us to benefit from his blessings [*baraka*], said, “Give life to your devotional gatherings by sitting with those before whom one is shy.” This is one of my (Bahanan) last questions.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be please with him, answered me and he added it merits in accordance to the meaning of the phrase, “It seems that the problem here lies in taking shyness to mean ‘showing off’. When the motive behind an act of obedience is a concern for what ‘other people think’, then it would be to a certain extent showing off. However, showing off has nothing to do with shyness. The first is to act in obedience for the sake of the rank [maqam] and status [hal] to be attained with people and in the pursuit of rewards and benefits, whether it is wealth or prestige. The second is a specific constriction that a man of noble character experiences in those situations that produce it and which drives him towards acts of goodness and the avoidance of base behaviour. It is often experienced in the company of the virtuous. There is a hadith that says,

اسْتَحِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى كَمَا تَسْتَحِي مِنْ رَجُلٍ صَالِحٍ.

“Be shy before Allah as you would be before a man of virtue.”

And ibn Sirin, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke about the opposite kind of situation; thus, “I see that the whole of wickedness lies in keeping the company of those whose presence does not impose shyness.”

It has also reached us that Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, was once asked why he had concealed himself from those he saw coming out of the Friday prayer which he had missed, he

said, “Whoever is not ashamed with Allah, the Exalted are not ashamed with people.” He may have attributed these words to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him but, being in some doubt, I have refrained from stating it to be so, for it is perilous to speak falsely about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and severe threats were proffered against those who do so.

Question (31)

Finally, I (Bahanan) asked the Imam, may Allah cause us to benefit from him, “Whether a young boy guilty of showing off, loses his reward. What is the ruling of such behaviour?”

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered me, “You should know that a boy until he reaches puberty, is one of those against whom the ‘pen’ records nothing. Therefore, his acts of hypocrisy are not sinning. However, when his hypocrisy involves acts of obedience or devotions, his reward is lost, whereas when sincere, he does receive it. It is said that the rewards for a boy’s actions are recorded in his parents’ leaves. It would not be too far to say that the evil in the boy’s hypocrisy reflects on those whose duty it is to guide him and teach him sincerity, whether these be his parents, custodians or any other person of similar function. These should urge children to perform their obligatory duties such as prayers and fasts and prevent them from transgressions such as adultery and drinking intoxicant.

While the ruling is conditional, it is too long to look at its examples. What is said above should suffice.



Collections of Questions from the Virtuous Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmad az-Zabidi

Question (32)

The Virtuous Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmad az-Zabidi, may Allah benefits us from him, asked the Imam, about those whose intention in acting is to obtain the rewards for their divine deeds in the hereafter.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered the Sheikh, “This is a praiseworthy motive and a blessed effort which will be well-rewarded, and it is what the virtuous believers have done, both the ancients and the latecomers. The servant is created weak and poor; he cannot do without the favours of his Rich Great Lord.

The answer, in short, is that one can elaborate on it at great length, but here is a brief explanation: those who work for the sake of Allah the Exalted can be divided into three kinds:

Those who work because they fear punishment, and these are the ‘fearful’.

Those who work because they are desirous of the reward, and these are the ‘hopeful’.

Finally, those who work to conform to the supreme Divine orders, and these are the ‘gnostics’.

The ‘gnostics’ cannot dispense with hope and fear nor the ‘fearful’ with hope and knowledge, but the designation of servant depends on his dominant station [*maqam*] and state [*hal*].

Some Sufis have implied that the states of those who work in the hope of reward and the fear of punishment are deficient or low and this should be taken to mean that one should be aware that those who work to conform to orders are superior to those who have hopes and fears, and this is indeed so. Still, these are degrees, some higher than others, and it is not the servant’s, that is not within his ability, to establish himself in one of his choices, for the matter belongs to Allah the Exalted, He is the One Who creates those of His servants whom

He will in whichever location He will. And the Real inevitably establishes in each of the three degrees a group of believers whose states [*hal*] become excellent and whose hearts become sound only by working according to the degree [*maqam*] established for them.

Perhaps some gnosis, when disapproving the degree of those who work in hope and fear, refer in reality to those who would not have worked at all as if they had no wish for reward nor fear of punishment, whose hearts contain neither the respect nor awe for the Real that should lead them to conform to His commands and prohibitions. The matter is obscure, and I have seen things attributed to certain people of the path which appear wrong or extravagant.

In my opinion, to work to obey orders and seek the good pleasures and proximity of Allah is laudable and good. To work in the hope of reward and awe of punishment is also praiseworthy and excellent. Only the all-embracing among the people of Allah, the Exalted, work according to all three degrees [*maqam*] fully and perfectly, but this is rare.

Each man should know where he stands and acts accordingly. Do not be like the bad worker who works only when given his wage nor like the bad slave who shows courtesy only when afraid of being beaten. Work for the sake of Allah the Exalted, because He is the Lord and Master, and has ordered to do some acts avoided others. Hope for your reward and attribute it to Allah's generosity and benevolence. Fear the punishment deserved by your lack of courtesy and shortcomings in worshipping your Lord and hope to be accorded safety from it by way of Allah's pardon and graciousness. This flexible pattern is the white road, as behave the virtuous and scholars. Any man possessed of insight who reflects on their words and behaviour will understand what we have just said, take it with certainty.

وَسَتَعْفُرُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، وَنَحْمَدُهُ كَثِيرًا.

We ask Allah the Exalted for forgiveness
And praise and thank Him abundantly.

Question (33)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, which was better, to remember [zikr] Allah silently or aloud!

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, “You should know that the gnostic scholars have said much about this. The gist of it is that silent remembrance is better when one fears being showing off, disturbing another who is praying or any other such activities. When it is assured that no such challenges exist then uttering it aloud are better because it involves more effort, its benefit spreads to others, and it has a more substantial effect on one’s presence and concentration, and this, however, is for the feeble-hearted whose presence is imperfect, and absorption in Allah is incomplete. There is a hadith,

“The best remembrance is the hidden one.

خَيْرُ الْذِكْرِ الْخَفِيِّ.

And the Quran says,

“Remember your Lord within yourself.”¹

وَادْعُ كُلَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ.

There are other hadiths mentioning remembrance done aloud. Therefore there is excellence in both, the differences being due to the variability of persons and circumstances. Let the invoker do what he feels is better for his heart, more collecting for his determination, and more suitable for his state.

And Allah knows best.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَم.

Question (34)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about the saying of the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

إِنَّ وَادِيًا فِي جَهَنَّمَ تَسْتَعِدُّ مِنْهُ جَهَنَّمُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً، أَعْدَّ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِلْفَرَاءِ الْمَرَاثِينَ.

“There is a valley in Hell against which the hell itself cries out seventy times a day for protection; it has been prepared by Allah the Exalted for those scholars of this community who are hypocrites.”

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 205.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, may Allah bestow the best of reward for him, us and the Muslims with his answered, “If the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, means by the hypocrites of this community, those who outwardly display faith and obedience while they remain, in their hearts, totally lacking in them, and who behave thus out of showing off to acquire a particular reputation and keep their real natures hidden, then these are the attributes of the hypocrites who are devoid of faith and will abide forever in the fire. For them to be in that valley against which the hell itself cries out for protection means that their torment and punishment will be magnified on account of their fraudulent simulation and deceitfulness.

But the Prophet, may Allah blessings and peace be upon him, means by hypocrite scholars those who harbour faith but are so overcome by their love for social eminence and high status that they showing-off in a display of their devotion knowledge to achieve them. Their imprisonment in that valley can be interpreted in one of two ways. Either the end of their lives will be sinister, may Allah the Exalted protect us, they will thus remain in perpetual torment and be in a state similar to those mentioned before.

Or the second meaning is that they will be treated with harshness and severity by being cast into that valley, then they will be rescued and leave it by the mercy of Allah, following the immutable law that none whose heart contains the least amount of faith will be held in the fire perpetually. Hypocrisy is one of the highest major sins, and it is also the smaller kind of idolatry.”

Question (35)

The Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about the reason why a certain man remembers Allah in abundance yet experiences none of the experiences of remembrance which belong to those who can taste them?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him and may we benefit from him answered, “The reason is that his heart is unsound, being neither free from reprehensible attributes nor filled with praiseworthy ones. During remembrance, he fails to expel the thoughts and insinuations his soul entertains, and he has not severed the outward attachments which distract him from devoting himself entirely to the remembrance of Allah the Exalted, he is not being disciplined by a sheikh possessed of the gnosis of Allah the Exalted and of the knowledge of the inward and outward, and there are other reasons.

Those who, like us, have failed to fulfill those conditions must remember Allah the Exalted abundantly with their tongues and strive to achieve the presence of the heart; this is how they are to expose themselves to the grants of Allah the Exalted, and it is not unlikely that He will grant them relief from whence they do not expect it. They should not wonder that they do not experience any of the spiritual experiences that the people of the path find in remembrance since the conditions leading to them remain unfulfilled.

Question (36)

The Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about a man who, as was described by some, experienced the invocation of the tongue together with the heart, then that of the heart while the tongue was silenced, the heart also lost its ability to invoke, but the meaning remained and flowed through his inward and outward parts. This third state [*hal*], in which both the tongue and the heart are unable to invoke, he found most estranging.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, “This man should be regarded as subject to the spiritual experiences peculiar to the invokers and that state which he found estranging is, in reality, the noblest and highest ranking of the three. He has but one further fourth state of remembrance to achieve, which is the kernel of kernels and which is to contemplate the invoked and become lost in Him to himself and all other creatures, and even to his

extinction [*fana*], and this is the ultimate aim and the highest station. This man owns much good, and he is advancing on the path of those who remember Allah and have similar experiences.

حَفَّنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِحَقَائِقِ الْإِيْقَانِ،
وَرَفَعْنَا إِلَى مَقَامِ الْإِحْسَانِ
بَعْدَ التَّحْقِيقِ بِمَقَامِي الْإِسْلَامِيِّ وَالْإِيمَانِ.

May Allah the Exalted grant us,
And you the realization of the truths of certitude [*yaqin*],
And elevate us to the station [*maqam*] of excellence [*ihsan*],
After our realization of the two stations [*maqam*]
of submission [*Islam*] and faith [*Iman*].

Question (37)

The Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about the state [*hal*] of absence which occurs to the invokers.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be please with him, and may we benefit from him, and may Allah bestow the best of reward for him, answered, “This absence state is to be unaware of all but Allah the Exalted until the person misses himself, and one’s invocation, having become lost in the contemplation of the Invoked, Exalted is He such an absence is the ultimate presence, its occurrence is rare and its persistence more unique still.

Question (38)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about those sicknesses of the heart which no cause is known.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and he is satisfied, answered, “When the nature of the sickness is known, the cause is also known. For gnostics [*arifin*] when they recognize the sickness know the cause. When the nature of the

sickness is unknown, then the heart should be treated with the general remedies that are effective for all its ailments. For example, the thoughtful recitation of the Quran, perseverance in the remembrance of Allah the Exalted with attentiveness, the frequent remembering of death, keeping the company of the virtuous and reading useful books like those of al Ghazali and so on.

Question (39)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about a man whose good works bore him fruits in this world such as sweetness in communing with Allah the Exalted, and because of these he became even more eager to perform deeds, would this flaw the perfection of his effort?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and we benefit from him, answered, “Yes, this is a flaw that people should be wary. They should not act for this purpose, nor be deceived by it, nor trust in it, for it may be a lure. They should thank Allah for what He has granted them and concentrate solely on Him to the exclusion of all else, whatever it may be.”

Question (40)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, which of these two persons was better, a man who remembers his sins and is so aggrieved that he wishes to die in this state for fear of falling into further sins or in awareness of the goodness of such a state, or one in the same situation who wishes death to be delayed so that he may be able to repent and reform his heart?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and he is satisfied, answered, “Both states [maqam] are excellent and superior. The one in which a man maintains most of the time is the one that is preferable and more suitable for him.

A situation was reported to us which, although not identical with yours, is nevertheless related. Three of our virtuous predecessors once met, and one of them said, “I wish to die for I fear the effect of temptations on my religion.”

The second said, “I wish to live for I hope I shall be granted repentance or good deeds.”

And the third one said, “I neither wish to die nor to live, I wish only that which Allah the Exalted wishes and chooses for me.”

His words were met with admiration and approval by the others. All three states are excellent and superior, and each of them was maintained on his own. The possessor of the third state is the most perfect because of his ready acceptance of Allah’s choice, Exalted is He. These are matters to be experienced and, since they can be grasped neither by an effort of the will nor by wishful thinking, it is not man’s to choose that which suits and pleases him best.

Question (41)

The Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, whether the beginning of the quest or will of the seeker was a matter of choice and effort or of being overpowered and forced into it?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and we benefit from him, answered, “Disciples and travellers differ in this and can be divided into two groups.

The first are travellers by choice and the expenditure of effort, then they set out seeking before being attracted and pulled into the discipline.

The second is overpowered and forced into travelling; they are attracted and pulled into the path before they choose to travel.

Some people of the path believe that those who travel first then being pulled into the path are superior, and others that those who are attracted and pulled first into the path then begin to travel are superior.”

Question (42)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, about a particular heat that some invokers experience inwardly [*batin*] when they concentrate, which then spreads outwardly [*dzahir*] to their limbs, then is followed by exhaustion.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and we benefit from him, answered, “This heat is one of the things that come upon the invoker and consumes the blemishes that remain in both the servant’s inward [*batin*] and his outward [*dzahir*], it is excellent and beneficial. However, if the invoker is anxious that he may be overcome by it then let him abandon the particular invocation he is engaged in and substitute for it with sending greetings [*selawat*] on the Messenger of Allah, and his family, may blessings and peace be upon him, اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَسَلِّمْ.

or by invoking, لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“There is neither ability nor strength saves from Allah.”

Question (43)

Sheikh az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam, why the benefits consequent upon saying ‘There is no God except Allah’ [لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ] was told by the Messenger, may blessings and peace be upon him to depend on certain conditions such as truthfulness and sincerity when it is well known that a Muslim does, in effect, utter it with truth and sincerity?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, may Allah bestow the best of reward for him and may we benefit from him, answered, “The issue is as mentioned like that, the meaning of sincerity [*ikhlas*] and truth [*siddiq*] in this context is explained in one hadith is that which keeps the person saying it from sins.

And in another hadith that a man should never prefer this world to the next. It is as if what is meant by truth [*siddiq*] and sincerity [*ikhlas*] here is the reality of the testimony and its objective. Both are

sound only in those whose certitude [*yakin*] is perfect [*kamil*] and whose faith profound and sincere. It is incumbent that the believer should hope strongly for Allah's mercy, fear his wrath strongly and be pure from the soiling of illusion.

As for the hadith concerning the man with the records and the parchment cards, the proof on the parchment card one that has been accepted, although a Muslim must have uttered it numerous times. It has been said regarding Allah, Exalted is He, saying,

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا.

“Whoever brings a good deed to Judgement Day receives ten times as much to his credit.”¹

That the condition for acceptance is to bring it, not just do it, for one may do it but not deliver it because it was not done as prescribed and was thus not received with acceptance and satisfaction.

Fear and hope must, therefore, remain, for they are the two remedies, each of which corrects the other when it becomes excessive.

Sharia contains both the general and specific remembrance. It is a comprehensive source for a multitude of people, each taking from it according to his calibre and state, and in this, they are of many different degrees [*maqam*]; each is intended with a specific situation. To go into the details of this would be too lengthy.

Allah, the Exalted says,

فَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبُهُمْ كُلُّهُ وَأَشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ.

“Each group knew its place for water. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah.”²

وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ.

“And be grateful and give thanks to Allah, if it is Him you worship.”³

¹ Surah 6 al Annam Verse 160.

² Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 60.

³ Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 172.

Question (44)

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed az-Zabidi, also asked the Imam among other things, about isolation [*uzla*] and its rules?

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, “You inquired about isolation and its rules in these corrupt upside-down times where people are most distracted and forgetful of working for their life to come, yet keen on this world, much preoccupied with it, eager to amass its riches and deceived by its ornamentation. And you said that to keep their company and mix with them had become perilous for that reason and because most of their conversation was slanderous, irrelevant and meaningless.

It is as you say

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

“There is no might or power except with Allah the Most-High and the Supreme in Glory.”

It is incumbent upon a man who is concerned for his religion should not keep the company of such people or frequent them of his own accord; otherwise, he will suffer diminution and loss. If they are imposed on him by force of circumstance, he must remain silent and refrain from joining in their conversation. He must counsel them gently whenever possible and draw their attention to the things which might reform and save them.

I can think of no excuse for someone to abandon the Friday and other congregational prayers under the pretext that the times are corrupt; neither can he forsake his obligation to preserve his kinship bonds by visiting his relatives from time to time. But it is my opinion that he should mix with the people of these times only as much as is necessary to fulfill his religious as well as his worldly needs. He must remain silent whenever they converse about what they should not and be of good counsel whenever he can. If they behave ethically and correctly, he should assist and join them, and this is how a man of virtue living among Muslims should behave. The only other alternative is to avoid them and take to the deserts and other desolate places to preserve one’s religion and give priority to the soundness of

one's heart. These matters were explained in full by our master and leader the Proof of Islam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him and grant us to benefit from him, in his book '*Minhaj*' and he devoted a full volume of his book '*Ihya*' to them."

Question {45}

The Sheikh az-Zabidi also asked the Imam whether the one who loves certain people but does not behave as they do will be with them unconditionally as can be understood from the hadith,

“A man is with whom he loves.” الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ.

Then Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted be pleased with him, and may we benefit from him, answered, “It appears to us from the statements of authoritative commentators on this hadith that there seem to be a limitation in some aspects of the issue and not to all of them.

The one who loves must conform to the loved one in all aspects including Unification, the careful performance of obligatory acts, the avoidance of perilous prohibited acts, and the performance of whatever good deeds are within reach. For to love someone is to emulate and follow him as much possible, no love is true otherwise, for it will then be nothing but words devoid of any reality.

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Do not be deceived by the hadith, ‘A man is with whom he loves’ when you suffer from distraction, illusion and desertion of good deeds, for the Jews and the Christians love their Prophets but are of certainty not with them.” End of quote.

In my opinion, similarly, some of the heretics of this community love some of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, significantly, they are loyal to them and may go so far as to lose their lives for them; nevertheless, they are of certainty not with them since they have gone against their way and example by detesting and disowning the other companions for whom they show no loyalty, as

well as by other innovations in religion. This matter is one on which there is no disagreement.

As this is so with innovations, the same, or nearly so, will of necessity apply to transgressions, mixing good with evil works and persistent sinning.

These are degrees of good and evil and other degrees can be measured similarly. The ugliest of ugly things is disbelief in all its many degrees, then innovations, which are not all equal. Then depravity; then mixing good with evil, and these last two also exhibit many degrees.

The opposite of all this can equally well be stated about good; so understand our indications and ponder on our words for they are both highly valuable and indispensable. With reflection, the intended goal will appear, and the meaning will become clear.

وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

“And Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.”¹

Question {46}

The Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad on some other issues, but the answer manuscript was missing, and may we benefit from it.

Then he recalled the issues and said that the said letter contained questions concerning certain conditions in which Allah the Exalted, through His preordaining establishes some of His servants, and which of these conditions is superior to the others, and excellent is His arrangement.

Then you should know that for those who are established by Allah, Transcendent is He, in any condition such as poverty or affluence, eminence or obscurity, or other similar states, that is legally unobjectionable, superiority lies in fulfilling the rights of Allah,

¹ Surah 24 an-Noor Verse 46.

Transcendent is He, that is necessary to that condition and in maintaining its required courtesies than in desiring a situation different from the one they are established in, for they would thus be discourteous towards their Lord, the High and Majestic.

As for the man who inquires, about spiritual stations [*maqam*] to know which of them is better, without being himself established in any of them, it would be extremely lengthy to speak to him about them.

However, if he was to ask which of anonymity or fame is superior? We would say, “It will differ with different people; anonymity is better for those with specific attributes, while recognition is better for those with different ones, for they then would be better than those in obscurity and vice versa. However, there is a difference between these two conditions, so reflect on it.

Moreover, the obscure cannot render themselves famous; neither can the famous make themselves obscure, and this leaves only that which we have said, that is to observe where Allah the Exalted has established you and maintain the basic courtesy towards Him as it should be.

Question (47)

The Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad on the states of the soul [*nafs*] and about remembrance.

Imam al-Haddad said this in his reply, “And they mention in the question about the states of distraction, heedlessness, excess, illusion and forgetfulness of death and of the need to gather provision for the Appointed Time that routine to the souls of people who nevertheless believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Last Day.”

“Souls are real as you have said and, in the state that you have described, and there are reasons

The Imam, the Proof of Islam, attributed such a state to his noble soul in one of his treatises, but this was out of humility, may Allah have mercy on him, and grant us to benefit from him.

In short, one should make battle with such a soul, never neglect to discipline, alert, and remind it, and illuminate its darkness with the lights of sincere acts of worship and continuous routine remembrance [awrad].

As for the states that you say occur to the remembering disciple, the last mentioned state [hal] which begins with languor and ends with slumber is a good state [hal], and there are no states of true remembrance beyond it except one, which is the state of contemplation.

He should be advised to persevere and continue with truthfulness and sincerity, seeking the highest Truth, for no other reason or motive except to establish his pure servitude before Allah's Lordship. Then only such singleness of direction and purpose can avail under those circumstances.

وَهُوَ الْفَنَانُ الْعَلِيمُ،

“And He (Your Lord) is the one to decide, the One Who knows all.”¹
الْمُنَانُ الْكَرِيمُ.

The Bountiful and the Generous.



A Question from Abdullah bin al-Haitham

Question (48)

Abdullah bin al-Haitham asked the Imam about the meaning of the word or ‘intuitive’, [albadiha] as well as about the saying of the ordinary people:

بِحَقِّ الْإِثْنَيْنِ مَفْتَاحُ الْبَابَيْنِ

“For the sake of Monday. the key to the two doors.”

¹ Surah 34 Saba Verse 26.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him answered, then said in his answer, “As for you ‘Abdullah, a letter explaining your first letter was sent to you containing the explanation of the word you inquired about in the invocation prayers [*dua*] of the Beloved, may blessings and peace be upon him, but perhaps it has failed to reach you. ‘*Uqba*’ means ‘return’, that is, “It is to You, O Allah that the one who seeks Your good pleasure must continually return to until You are pleased.”

As for ‘intuitive’ behaviour [*albadiha*], it is whatever a person does or says without prior reflection. When he does the right thing purposely, he is said to be of good ‘intuitive’ behaviour or the presence of mind. When he fails to do act correctly or happens to do it by chance, he is dispraised for his poor ‘intuitive’ and criticized for having neglected to reflect and ponder before acting.

As for the ordinary people saying, “For the sake of Monday, the key to the two doors,” you should know that most of those sayings which you frequently hear from the ordinary people escape being measured by the criteria of either Law or reason.

Should a man of wisdom wish to force upon these words an interpretation that is, to a certain extent correct, he might be able to find one. Monday is the day when Allah reviews deeds, one of the two doors may, therefore, be taken to be that through which they are presented, and it will thus be open before them. The other door to be the entrance through which passes the divine assistance [*madad*], descending toward those whose deeds were accepted and which cause it to open.

Another possible interpretation, is that one of the two doors may be taken to be that of the Prophet’s entry into the world, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family and the other that of his exit from it. For he was born on a Monday, may blessings and peace be upon him and his family, and passed away on a Monday. There are numerous other venues for interpretation.



Collections of Questions from Isa bin Ahmad Ba-Hadrami

Question (49)

Isa bin Ahmad Ba-Hadrami asked the Imam about the relative merits of poverty and wealth and the seeming contradictions that exist in the hadiths concerning them.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him, and grant us to benefit from him and bestow upon us his secrets and blessings, answered him,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate.

All praises belong to Allah, Who made poverty the adornment of His virtuous servants and the embellishment of His successful elite. However, this is only so when it accompanied on their part with contentment thankfulness and patient endurance of whatever hardships, the Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge imposes on them. But when accompanied by panic, resentment and objection to what destiny has brought, then it becomes a great affliction which leads to perpetual torment. Thus, whatever praise of poverty is to be found in the Book and Sunna refers to that poverty, which is accompanied by patience, contentment and the maintenance of perfect courtesy with Allah the Exalted. An example of this is when, he may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْفَقْرُ أَرْبَى بِالْمُؤْمِنِ مِنَ الْعِدَارِ الْحَسَنِ عَلَى حَدِّ الْفَرَسِ.

“Poverty is more embellishing to the believer than a beautiful harness on a horse’s cheek.”

Whatever disparagement of poverty is to be found refers to that poverty which is accompanied by anger with destiny and resentment at how things were made to happen. This kind may lead its man to object to Allah’s management of His creatures’ affairs, and it refers to what, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Poverty is not far from becoming disbelief.” گَادَ الْفَقْرُ أَنْ يَكُونَ كُفْرًا.

Poverty is more likely than wealth to lead to salvation and success both in this world and the next. Poverty has been the choice of the most venerable of people, the Prophets and the saints, both in ancient and more recent times.

For the poor man, when satisfied and thankful, has a status with Allah, Transcendent is He that the wealthy people never achieve even were the person to give both himself and his wealth away for the sake of his Lord, Exalted is He.

On the other hand, when resentful, the poor man becomes worse than the worst of the rich people because his affliction would include objecting to Allah the Exalted, and this is a horrendous matter. In contrast, the affliction of the rich is to be deceived by the world and indulge in enjoying it in a reprehensible manner, and this is the answer to your question, so do understand it.

وَصَلَى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

“May Allah bless our master, Muhammad, his family, Companions and grant them peace.”

Question (50)

Ba-Hadrami also asked the Imam about the prolongation of some peoples' lifespans as mentioned in some hadith.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be please with him, and grant us to benefit from him, answered Ba-Hadrami, “It has been soundly transmitted that a lifespan is an issue predestined and subject to neither prolongation nor shortening. Scholars, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on them, have disagreed on the meaning of the mentioned prolongation. Some of them chose the apparent meaning of the hadiths and stated that both extension and shortening depend upon certain conditions; for instance, if the lifespan of a man is so many years and he did such and such actions, it would be prolonged by so much. The same may be said about shortening, and there are indications to that effect in tradition.

But some of them, among them ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, said, “Verily a man has a lifespan in this world from his birth to his death and another in the intermediary world [*Alam Barzakh*], from his death to his resurrection; both are preordained. When he obeys Allah the Exalted his worldly life is prolonged at the expense of his intermediary one [*Barzakh*], but when he contravenes and sins, it is shortened and his intermediary life prolonged. Thus, the prolongation will not be from an external source, and the preordained span will not be altered.” And this is what I hold to be correct.

Some scholars believe that the prolongation is that one’s life would become blessed so that one man’s shorter life would outweigh another man’s longer life without this prolongation being physical.

The purpose of seeking a long life is that it should suffice for one to increase the range of his good deeds, this has indeed occurred to that fortunate servant, and it is thus a real prolongation and a useful increase. Reflect on this answer and give it its due.

A Question from Sheikh AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad asShibami

Question {51}

The Sheikh AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad asShibami asked the Imam about what the Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Qurashi, “The soul [*nasf*] falls back on its habits when hardships come...!”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be please with him, and may we be content and please with his answer, answered the Sheikh, “You should know that the soul here and in similar contexts is those subtle bodies which are inclined to enjoy the world’s pleasures, and this is the soul [*nasf*] of the traveller who is not yet firmly established in his travelling or the superficial scholar or the heedless common man. Such souls undoubtedly resort to their habitual ways and means when afflicted with hardship because they concentrate wholly on them to the exclusion of all else, taking refuge in Allah as the last resort when they see that no assistance is forthcoming from the material worlds.

On the other hand, the firmly established traveller and the gnostic [arif] who has reached Allah the Exalted have a little soul to speak of, for these are either ‘serene’, that is submissive to the truth, and dominated by the power of the spirit, or else imprisoned and vanquished, possessing neither the ability to act nor to move. So do understand!

As for a man to be subject to human weaknesses, this is normal, something that appears at times and disappears at others but is never totally abolished, for Allah, the Exalted has a subtle secret in maintaining it, and this is indicated by the things that happen to the great men and reveal its presence. It is often so well hidden that it gives the impression that it has gone altogether, for example in the stations of ‘reliance’ [tawakkal], ‘love’ [mahabba] and ‘contentment’ [ridaa] well as the states of the ‘truth of certainty’ [hakul yaqin], and its ‘eye of certainty’ [aiyul yaqin] and in other states which come under these.

As for the ‘knowledge of certainty’ [ilmul yaqin] its possessor resorts to his habitual means first before being led back by his knowledge to Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He.

The important thing is for a man to seek refuge in Allah instinctively when stricken with sudden hardship, without thinking, calculating or relying on worldly means. When he does use some worldly avenues instead of relying on Divine management, he should use them outwardly while his heart and secret remain with Allah the Exalted to Whom all matters return, in Whose Hand is all good,

وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

“And Who has power over all things.”¹

Brief as it is, meditate on this answer for it is of high value and, draws attention to things which would otherwise require much clarification and elaboration. وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ.

“But Allah tells (you) the Truth, and He guides to the right path.”²

¹ Surah 67 al Mulk Verse 1.

² Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 4.

**Collection of Questions from The jurist [fagih]
Muhammad bin AbdurRahman Mazru**

Question {52}

The jurist [fagih] Muhammad bin AbdurRahman Mazru, may Allah's mercy be upon him, asked the Imam, "Is it permissible for one who has yet to attain to the noble stations [maqam] such as hope [raja], love [mahabba], and contentment [ridaa] to constrain himself to act according to them?"

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be please with him, and bestow the best reward to him, answered him, "You should know, may Allah the Exalted be your teacher, that for one who neither possesses a sound state [hal] nor a firmly established station [maqam] to act according to them is neither within the servant's power or choice, not even if by wishful thinking he imagines it to be so.

Furthermore, he would then be in danger of falling into the evil of false claims. That which is within one's power and choice is to wish to attain to them and travel the road that was opened by Allah the Exalted.

The Proof of Islam, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, and we benefit from him, excellently explained these matters in the 'Ihya' and other books. A person may bring to himself a state of hope [raja] or contentment [ridaa] by thinking of what was said about them, should one of these states then occur to him he may act accordingly.

There are states [hal] that alight on the heart without having tried to cause or expose himself to them; when these occur one acts accordingly, whether one wishes or not.

You should know this!

All the paper in the world would not suffice should we wish to elaborate further on this.

Question (53)

Mazru also asked, “Is it permissible for one who fears showing off to refrain from enjoining good and forbidding evil?”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be please with him, and grant us to benefit from him, answered, “This is under no circumstance permissible! He must strive against his ego to remove showing off even as he acts, not by abandoning action for that is Satan’s wish. The act of leaving an effort was called ‘showing off’ by al-Fudail, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him and grant us to benefit from him, “To abandon action because of people is showing off and to act for their sake is idolatry!”

So long as one fears showing off, he is likely to remain a long distance from it. That which is beyond his control, that is, the thoughts that cross his heart, are rewarded by his loathing them whenever they are evil.

Question (54)

The scholar, Muhammad bin AbdurRahman Mazru, asked about specific thoughts that occurred to him and made him fear for himself.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him and may we benefit from him, answered, “You should know that you will remedy these with nothing better than to ignore and forget them and whenever they occur, recite frequently,

سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْحَلَاقِ، إِنْ يَشَاءُ يَدْبِهُكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ.

“Transcendent is the Ever-Creating King!” “If He so pleased, He could blot you out and bring in a New Creation.”¹

And you should know that these thoughts that force themselves upon you are afflictions that a believer is rewarded for when he maintains the manners to the demands due to the Real [Hak]. These thoughts are directed by Allah to afflict the servant humbly and needfully, he may commit himself to Him, and He will answer,

¹ Surah 35 Faatir Verse 16.

أَمَّنْ يُحِبُّ الْمُضْطَرَ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ.

“Is it not He Who listens to the distressed soul when it calls on Him, and Who relieves its suffering.”¹

Thoughts may result from such acts of the person as eating unlawful food or mixing with an evil person. So, he must put himself under scrutiny and repent from any such issues that he sees. If he suspects something wrong in his self but is unable to locate it, let him repent from all sins, those that he is aware of and those he is not.

If thoughts may be conceived to occur without cause, then they should be regarded as real afflictions, and one should patiently endure them until their time ends by the Will of Allah the Exalted.

Question (55)

The gentleman mentioned above also asked Imam al-Haddad whether the reward for remaining seated after the dawn prayer at the same place where one has prayed until sunrise depends on staying there or would also be obtained by those who stand up from the prayer area and either go home or somewhere else while maintaining uninterrupted invocation and glorifying Allah [*tasbih*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him, and we benefit from him answered, “You should know that the reward said to be due for remembering Allah the Exalted from after the dawn prayer until the sun rises for a condition, in some hadith narrations, that one remains seated where one has prayed, while in others it is stated unconditionally. Staying in one’s place was mentioned by the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, because it is more conducive to maintaining concentration in remembrance [*dhikir*] and avoiding dispersion. Those who keep to the remembrance [*dhikir*] and remain collected will inevitably receive their reward, whether they stay seated in their places or get up, mainly if getting up from it was prompted by one’s care to increase in collectedness in *dhikir* by

¹ Surah 27 an-Naml Verse 62.

avoiding certain things in that place such as showing off or loud voices.

The same applies if one were to move for a matter involving an increase in goodness and benevolence while maintaining *dhikir* and persevering in it.

If, however, one leaves prompted by some desire such as it worldly matters or it pleasure such as a cup of coffee, then, as it appears, no reward will be obtained. Similarly, the bonus is lost if the said sitting was mentioned in a hadith for some quality specific to it and unknown to us. The secrets of Prophethood, the subtleties of its meanings and the particularities of its perception are challenging to grasp comprehensively except by those who are established within it, and this is a door that was closed by the death of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. “

Understanding is a vast ocean where each swims according to the share allotted to him by his Lord.

وَقَنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَإِيَّاكُمْ لِإِصَابَةِ الصَّوَابِ فِي جَمِيعِ الْأَحْوَالِ .

“May Allah the Exalted grant us and you success in hitting the right mark in all circumstances.

Question (56)

The jurist [*faqih*] Muhammad bin Abdurrahman Mazru, may Allah's mercy be upon him asked Imam al-Haddad, “Why a person should be attached to creations and how he can get rid himself of it?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and may we benefit from him, answered, “You should know that its cause is a weakness in one's certitude [*yaqin*] and the remedy to rid oneself of it is firm certitude, and this is achieved by two means: One of which is to meditate on Allah's speaking indications [*ayat*] which are the verses [*ayat*] of the Book [*Quran*] and His silent signs which the wonders of existence in both higher and lower worlds or realms, and this is called reflection [*fikr*] by the people of realization.

The second is to refine the soul and polish the heart's mirror By effective discipline and sincere effort in striving [*jihad*] until the Real manifest itself in it, and this is the way that the Sufis prefer may Allah have mercy on them and grant us benefit from them!

And do not think that certitude [*yaqin*] is a firm belief, for that it possessed by the generality of believers yet their attachment to creatures is undiminished. Certitude [*yaqin*] refers to is a Divine light that envelops the heart and takes hold of it so that its possessor desires nothing but Allah the Exalted and becomes indifferent to his self, let alone all other worlds.

One of the heart's effective remedies it to continually remember that no creature is capable of bring benefit or preventing harm to its self, no helplessness could be more significant, so how can a rational person become attached to such a one? These attachments can only be deceptions of the imagination, indicating weakness of certitude [*yaqin*]. So busy yourself with strengthening your certitude that you may escape them.

Question {57}

The mentioned jurist [*faqih*] asked Imam al-Haddad, "How is it that one loves the virtuous [*solihin*] while neither emulating them nor following the path that made them become so?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and grant us a realization of his knowledge [*ilm*] answered, "You should know that the benefit derived from loving them does not depend on emulating them in every way so that their every action is similarly performed, for the one who does that is none other than one of them and those who love him will then be counted among their lovers. However, the good that is dependent on loving them can only be won when some traces of emulating them begin to appear.

As for not following their way, this is nothing but a lack of determination, for determination is the mould of success and success is in the treasury of Allah the Exalted so ask Him, the Exalted, for it.

Question (58)

The mentioned jurist [*faqih*] asked Imam al-Haddad, “Why does one like those who praised him, even if it is not truly his, and dislike those who criticize him, even if for that which is true in him?”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and please upon us because of him, answered, “You should know that this issue is kneaded into the very nature of the Son of Adam, only those who have escaped from the necessities of their human nature and reached the level of the spiritual angels are safe from it. The way to do this was mentioned in answer to the first question. According to the people of sincerity [*ikhlas*], it is safe to regard praise and criticize, as well as, the persons praising or criticizing, as equal.

As for disliking criticize and liking praise, those can be permissible or forbidden according to the cause of the situation.

A man who is pleased with praise because it means that he is highly regarded by the other person, and is displeased with critic because it means that he is poorly seen, is a man who is veiled and has an inadequate share of the elect’s concentration. But one may be pleased with praise and displeased with critics with the thought that the tongues of creations are the pens of the Real (Allah), and that He, Transcendent is He, has revealed the person’s beauty and concealed ugliness. Such a man when his good points are shown and spoken about feels joy because of his hope that his Lord will treat him in the same manner in the Hereafter and when he is criticized, and his bad points are revealed he is fearful that his Lord may treat him in the same way in the Hereafter.

To go deeper into this matter would require lengthy elaboration; the last part of it was fully expounded by the Proof of Islam (Al-Ghazali) in the chapter on dispraising prominence and ‘showing off’ in his Book [*Ihya*].



Collection of Questions from The respected Sheikh AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad

Question (59)

The respected Sheikh AbdurRahman bin Abdullah Abbad, may Allah the Exalted mercy be upon him asked Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, whether the Proof of Islam, may Allah the Exalted mercy be upon him ever mentioned the ‘Knowledge of Certainty’ [*Ilmul Yaqin*], ‘Eye of Certainty’ [*Ainul Yaqin*] and ‘Truth of Certainty’ [*Haqul Yaqin*] in the manner that the People [*al-Qawm*] discourse on them?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be content with him, and increased his rewards, answered the Sheikh, “I have never come across this; however, the ‘*Ihya*’ and Imam Ghazali’s other writings do contain in various places references to these terms.

You say he gave an example about ‘being informed that Zayd was in the house,’ etc.” is an explicit reference to the three ranks even though they were not explicitly named. The knowledge of Zayd is the first of them.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَم

And Allah knows best.

Question (60)

The respected Sheikh Abdad, also asked, “Is it permissible for a man attract to himself noble stations [*maqam*] and states [*hal*] by reflecting on them in such a manner as to bring them on to a certain extent?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him and we benefit from his answer, answered, “Yes, it is. And reflecting on them is one way of reaching them, on condition that he does behave as is dictated by his reflection and joins practice to the reflection that requires it. As an example, hope is one of the stations that a servant may reach by reflection on the verses of the Quran and hadiths relating to it and performing those devotions that Allah the Exalted has made

necessary if one is to reach it. You can similarly apply this example to other stations.”

“As for states, these are gifts. Reflecting on them and other similar activities are a way of preparing oneself for them, after which they may or may not come. Yet, they may also come as pure favour with the door open to an unprepared person.”

Question (61)

The mentioned Sheikh Abdad, also asked Imam Al-Haddad about the utterance of Sheikh Abi Abdullah al-Qurashi, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and cause us to benefit from him,

“Listening, then understanding, then arriving, then tasting.”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and cause us to benefit from him, answered, “Arriving is to ‘tasting’ what listening is to understanding. As an example, ‘listening’ is when you hear a person describe the land and how wondrous it is. ‘Understanding’ is to assimilate what he has told you. ‘Arriving’ is to reach the land as described to you. And ‘tasting’ is to see and enjoy the wondrous things in it. He thus made use of that which is visible to indicate that which is not.”

Question (62)

The mentioned Sheikh Abdad, also asked Imam Al-Haddad about his statement in one of his treatises that the sheikh may refine a disciple [*murid*] without the latter being aware of it.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and cause us to benefit from him, answered, “This is so. The type of sheikh meant here is the Sheikh of the Opening [*Sheikh al-Fath*] who spiritually refines the disciple with thorough solicitude and wise care. Then there are two other kinds of sheikhs, and the first is the sheikh of discipline and courtesy [*Sheikh Riyada*] and the second, less significant one. This sheikh provides formal teaching and other

profitable knowledge and disciplines. These last two need to be known in person, respected, and firmly believed to be worthy of their task.

Sheikh Abu Hasan al-Shadhili exemplifies “Sheikh of the Opening” [*Sheikh al-Fath*], as we had described when he first met his disciple. Sheikh Abu Abbas al-Mursi, he told him, “You were made known to me ten years ago,” or perhaps he may have said ‘nine’.

Another example is that of Sayyid Yusuf of Fez with my master Sheikh AbuBakr bin Salim al-Alawi, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with them and give us of their support [*madad*]. Sheikh AbuBakr ‘spiritually visited’ or circumambulate [*tawaf*] him, while he was still in Morocco and before he ever came to Hadhramaut to meet the sheikh. He knew him and was able to describe him to others even as Sayyid Yusuf, may Allah mercy be upon him, was still going from one sheikh to another in Morocco, unaware of who the sheikh who was looking after him was? Until one of them swore to him that his sheikh was not in the Western provinces at all. And there are numerous other similar stories.

All three degrees may on rare occasions be united in one man who then becomes the “Absolute Sheikh” [*al-Sheikh al-Mutlaq*], the “precious elixir” and the “Red Sulphur” that is talked about but seldom found. However, Allah’s grace is vast, and His generosity all-enveloping.

Even when the Path is obliterated, and its stars disappear, the Divine Ability remains operative, and the domain of possibility is vast. It is not impossible in a blessed time, to find one in whom Allah has united the three degrees, towards whom He leads those of His servants whom He has willed good fortune, whom Allah makes known to those of His creation whom He wishes to raise to degrees of sainthood.”

ذلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ.

“That is the Grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding.”

“Reflect deeply on this letter, may Allah grant you success, for it is of great value. And whenever you read it be full of reverence and true acceptance, free yourself from any claim to knowledge and garb yourself in your confession that your comprehension lacks all penetration, and this will make Satan despair of you.”

Question {63}

Sheikh Abdad, also asked Imam Al-Haddad about the meaning of the term ‘erase’ in the writing of Sheikh alSudi, may Allah’s mercy be upon him and may we benefit from him,

وَامْلَأْ الْعُلُومَ وَمَا فَدْ كُنْتَ تَكْتُبُ
فَمَخْوَهُ وَاجِبٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مُكْتَبٍ.

“Erase all sciences and all that you used to write,

To erase them is necessary from all that is written.”

And similarly to the verse in the poem [*bait*] of the jurist [*figh*] Umar Ba’Makhrumah, whether this was identical with what al-Ghazali, the Proof of Islam, may Allah the Exalted mercy be upon them, mentions in the chapter on ‘Wonders of the Heart’ [*Ajaib alQulb*] in the ‘Ihya’ in the context of the veils that prevent the heart from the unequivocal contemplation of the truth?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah, the Exalted, be satisfied with him, he pleases with Him and may we benefit from him, answered: “Erasure” here has a different meaning from that mentioned by the Imam al-Ghazali.

To explain: The said ‘sciences’ are the experiences and images that the heart contains. The ‘erasure’ of sciences that the People speak about has two meanings. The first to erase every experience, image or thought that comes into the heart and distracts it from being absorbed in his wayfaring to Allah the Exalted, and should happen in the beginning and no traveller complete his travelling without it.

The second is on arrival to the state [*hal*] of extinction [*fana*], and it is to erase all memories, thoughts, images or any other thing to which the heart may become attached or even focus. It is to concentrate

one's aspiration wholly on Allah, Glory be to Him so that nothing remains in the heart, but the remembrance of Allah, Majestic and August is He, and the will to head towards Him, Exalted is He.

Erasure in this context means that one avoids relying and depending on 'things' and strives to remove all attachment to them that may exist in the heart. A sheer effort accomplishes this at the beginning and until it becomes one's state [*hal*], and that is the state of extinction [*fana*]. In that state [*hal*], all things which divert one away from Allah the Exalted and are beyond one's control are obliterated.

The person in such a state is absent, aware of nothing other than Allah the Exalted, not even of himself and his state of extinction [*fana*], and this is something to be experienced and not acquired by way of learning. Beyond this is the state of subsistence [*baqa*], and this is for those whom Allah the Exalted has destined for leadership [*imam*] and rendered worthy of the vice-regency [*khilafa*]. Obliteration is thus followed by confirmation in a manner which neither distracts one from Allah the Exalted nor prevents the total dedication of the heart to Him, the Exalted.

As for that which Al-Ghazali wrote, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, concerning that which veils the heart, that is, his statement that "the heart may be veiled from the clear vision of the truth by following"; if he, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, means following those who missed the truth in their endeavours, then the meaning is clear.

However, if he means following the independent scholars [*mujtahidun*] who did arrive at the truth, then many meanings are possible: one of which is that those who speak the truth may utter some of its aspects and keep silent about others which were nevertheless necessary to mention. Another is that the truth he speaks may be expressed in a simplified manner to be clear to the ordinary believers to whom Allah the Exalted has given him as a leader.

Then ‘Following’ as in those two examples, prevents the unveiled perception of the truth, which is the vision of things as they are with Allah the Exalted, (that is objectively) which is the attribute of Prophethood and sainthood [*waliyah*]. No person is required by law to worship Allah the Exalted in this manner since this is possible only for the elect. Such following neither detract from one’s faith nor prevents anyone who dies a believer from attaining to salvation and entering the Garden. All independent scholars [*mujtahid*] are correct, and their Lord rightly guides all believers who follow the leading religious scholars.

However, it is incumbent that one distinguish between Faith [*imam*] and Knowledge [*ilm*] on the one hand and Unveiling [*kashf*] and Inner Vision [*basira*] on the other; and between Salvation [*najah*] and Reward [*thawaba*] on the one hand, and blessedness [*saeadah*] and the Divine Vision [*ruqyah*] on the other. There are remote depths and obscure secrets in this matter, and the one who discourses on such sciences before those who have reached none of them by way of direct experience will only render them even more obscure by his explanations. We have said enough to solve the problem, Allah the Exalted willing, so reflect on it as it deserves.

Question (64)

The Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Abbad asked Imam al-Haddad about the difference between powerlessness and weakness.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him and he pleased with Him, and may we benefit from him, Ameen, answered, “You should know that powerlessness is the dwindling of the ability to either do or refrain from doing something to the extent that no such power remains.

If one can do a portion of the whole thing, then he is said to be able to do that part and powerless concerning rest. Powerlessness is the opposite of ability. Weakness is the opposite of strength, and strength is a part of the ability.

Weakness is thus incomplete ability so that the one who can achieve parts but not the whole of some activity said to be weak, and Allah the Exalted knows best.

Often, powerlessness is used in everyday language for idleness or inactivity, the opposite of activity. Thus, a person refrains, out of negligence and sluggishness from either doing or not doing something which is within his ability. These are my thoughts on the matter, and I have not referred to any books.

May peace be upon you.

Question {65}

Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Abbad asked Imam al-Haddad about ‘audition’ [*samaa*] for those who crossed the states [*hal*] and stations [*maqam*].

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, answered, “As for ‘audition’ by those who have crossed the states [*hal*] and stations [*maqam*], it is mentioned the Proof of Islam (al Ghazali) in the second chapter of the ‘Book of Audition’, and he refers to those who are extinct to everything other than Allah the Exalted, even to themselves.

The obvious example of this occurring between created beings is that of the women cutting their hands at the sight of Joseph’s beauty, they were genuinely extinct in contemplating him and thus unaware of themselves.



Collection of Questions from Sayyid Isa bin Sayyid Muhammad Alhabshie

Question {66}

The venerable Sayyid Isa bin Sayyid Muhammad Alhabshie asked Imam al-Haddad about whether the saying of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace upon him and his family,

“A man is with whom he loves,” **المرءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ.**

The above phrase was unconditional and thus applicable even to those whose words and deeds are dissimilar?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “You should know, may Allah the Exalted be your teacher, that this hadith induces both hope and alarm, for a man with whom he loves whether they be righteous or depraved. What then of those who love the ‘accursed world’ and are thus with it?

Then the togetherness, which is the consequence of love, will inevitably occur. However, love cannot be present unless one conforms to the beloved's acts and abstentions as far as possible.

So, love is a claim that cannot be established until only with the proof of such conformity. For the man who claims to love the person but diverges from him in conduct and actions to those of his aims and desires which are within his power, which neither supports those whom he supports nor shows hostility to those he is hostile to, will logically be deemed to be untrue.

True, it is not necessary to conform to the beloved in all his actions for this togetherness to occur, for then one would become effectively equal in everything where such equality is possible. You should know then that love can never be without such conformity.

Question (67)

Sayyid Isa asked Imam al-Haddad about alMuhasib's, may Allah's mercy be upon him, and may we benefit from him, saying,

لِكُلِّ عَابِدٍ فَتْرَةٌ إِمَّا إِلَى سُنَّةٍ، وَمَا إِلَى بِدْعَةٍ.

“Each worshipper has a period time and falls back either on at Prophetic practice [*Sunna*] or innovation or heresy [*bidaa*].”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah's mercy be upon him, and support us via his spiritual assistance [*madad*], answered, “I believe I have heard a similar saying attributed to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family. It means that a worshipper has in his beginnings so much determination in worship that it exceeds the limits of minimum practices and the norm advised on the general Muslims public. If he becomes firmly established in this and does not harm his mind or body in a legally reprehensible way, then this is for him a kind of perfection.

Then if the worshipper goes through a period of slackness when he falls below that level, after which he followed by a return to the prescribed pattern of minimum practices, returned to the *Sunna*, however, if the worshipper becomes wasteful by neglecting and shunning his devotions, he has fallen back into innovation. Let us give an example to clarify, when a man feels driven to worship and devote himself to Allah the Exalted, he may keep an all-night vigil. The worshipper will then inevitably slacken up because of the created human nature in him. If he retreats from an All-night vigil into keeping half or one-third of the night, he has achieved the *Sunna*, but if he abandons it altogether, then he has fallen into innovation. The meaning of innovation in this context is a deviation from the pattern of the virtuous predecessors.

Slackness seems to affect the majority but not all worshippers. It is incumbent that one should not refrain from initiating any regular devotion for fear of eventually slackening up, for that would be foolishness and self-deceit.

Collections of Questions from a teacher Ahmad bin Ali bin Dufah, the resident of al-Shihr

Question (68)

The teacher Ahmad asked Imam al-Haddad about the rules of isolation [*euzla*] and retreat [*khalwa*] as well as other things.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him, he pleased with Him throughout his life, and may we benefit from him answered, “You should know, may Allah the Exalted be your teacher, that isolation [*euzla*] is a more comprehensive term than retreat [*khalwa*]. It aims to be safe from evil and evil people. There are conditions to it, the most important of which are: to acquire the basic sciences of faith [*iman*] and doctrine and practice of submission [*Islam*], that one’s motive should not be his thinking-ill of other Muslims but his wish to preserve his religion, and that together with this, a person should be wary of his ego and anxious not to allow its evil to harm other Muslims. Other conditions are for the one who isolates himself not to abandon the Friday or other congregational prayers, nor to neglect any of the duties imposed on him by Allah the Exalted towards other people or his own family and not to abandon the company of those people of goodness who would be of religious benefit to him. Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him and grant others to benefit from him, has written convincingly on isolation in his book ‘The Method of the Worshippers’ [*Minhaj al-Abidin*] so do peruse it.

As for retreat [*khalwa*], it is more specific than isolation [*euzla*], and it aims to refine the soul and polish the mirror of the heart so that the veil between oneself and one’s Lord, Transcendent and Exalted is He, may be removed and all attachments to creatures severed so that no attentiveness to other than Allah the Exalted remains.

Its conditions are the same as those of isolation with the addition that one must not enter it except with a ‘realized sheikh’ [*sheikh muhakiki*]. However, if such a sheikh is not available but the

disciple has an enlightened insight, a powerful determination, strength of soul and exceedingly firm composure he is permitted to enter it.

Its length is usually forty [*arba 'in*] days, and that is why it was called “*al-Arba aniniyya*.” However, it may be of a ten, seven or three days. I have seen a ‘realized sheikh’ make a disciple remain in seclusion for a hundred and twenty days.

It seems to vary with the variations in level of purity or opaqueness of different people and with the differences between sheikhs. Al-Suhrawardi¹, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him and may we benefit from him, has devoted elaborate chapters to it in his book and you can read it if you wish.

My master Sheikh Abdullah bin AbuBakr al-Aidarus, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him and may we benefit from him, often used to mention brief seclusion [*khalwa*] where the disciple keeps secluded the night before Friday and the day while keeping to hunger, wakefulness, silence, isolation from people, absorption and concentration on Allah the Exalted and devotion to remembrance and the recitation of the Quran.

If you feel inclined to follow this pattern, then do for it is blessed and profitable. The sheikh, may Allah the Exalted spread his benefit, one of the most venerable of realized sheikh [*sheikh muhakiki*], is aware of many of the secrets of the path of Allah which had in previous days unknown to others.

Question (69)

The gentleman mentioned above also asked Imam al-Haddad whether the experiences and unveilings of the gnostics were continuous or occurred only in individual states [*hal*]?

¹ The Knowledge of Knowledge in Sufism, a book by Imam Abi Hafs Omar Al-Qurashi al Shafi'i alias Shahab al-Din Omar al-Suhrawardi who died in 632 AH.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him, and may we benefit from his blessings him, answered, “It seems that no unveiling of Divine Majesty or Beauty persists for very long; however when it does, it abolishes the servant’s discernment and renders him unaware of himself and his human nature. This state [*hal*] occurs to some people for a length of time and then departs.

When obligatory devotions, such as prayers and fasts, are missed due to such a state of absorption, then they must be requited [*qada’*] at a later time. It is the state [*hal*] of the traveller that higher realities appear to him at times and veil from him at other periods, and he remains so until he joins the masters [*mutamakkinun*]. His state becomes such that creation does not distract him from the Real, neither does the realities [*haqiqah*] lead him out of the boundaries of law [*shari’ah*] nor does the law [*shari’ah*] veil him from the realities [*haqiqah*]. Some of those realities became permanently unveiled for him, while others veil at times and unveil at others.

Such a person continues his daily life, engages in earning and business, as these neither detract anything from nor veil him from his Lord.

Question (70)

The gentleman mentioned above also asked Imam al-Haddad whether it was better for the disciple [*murid*] to remain near the sheikh or visit him frequently?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him, answered, “You should know that if the sheikh gives him an indication as to which of these two, he should do, then he should comply and firmly maintain himself in that condition.

If he finds that any ill feelings have arisen within him because of this advice, he should reveal all his affairs to the sheikh especially those concerning the path and the state of his heart neither awe nor modesty should prevent him from doing so.

If his sheikh gives him no indication as to whether or not he should live with him, he is to do what is best for his heart. And maintain his respect and reasonable opinion of his sheikh. Those who succeed and abide by the sheikh's choice, raising no objection and preferring it to their desires.

Should the disciple [*murid*] observe in his sheikh something which adversely affects his faith in him, he should inquire about it. However, knowing the sheikh, if he thinks that he will not approve of such an inquiry then he must interpret it in an upright manner worth of the status of the people of Allah's the Exalted.

As for those who, while said to affiliates to the path of Allah the Exalted, exhibit behaviour that is not open to justification, such as adultery or appropriating wealth unjustly, they fall under the laws ordained by Allah the Exalted for all Muslims, whether outwardly and inwardly.

If it can be imagined that such an affiliated person has a disciple [*murid*] who learns from the sheikh in awareness of what he has done, then he must believe that this was imposed on that servant (the sheikh) by the writing of the Pen or pre-destiny and that he will return to Allah the Exalted with the kind of sincere repentance [*taubah nasuha*] and sincere remorse that abolish the traces of sins and wash out their evil deeds.

If, however it becomes clear beyond suspicion or doubt that he is persisting in his sins and insolence with Allah the Exalted, then it has also become clear that he has been dispossessed and expelled by Allah Transcendent is He from His doorstep. He must then forsake and detest him for the sake of Allah the Exalted, for it is no small thing to be expelled from Allah the Exalted doorstep, having been near to Him, dispossessed after being given and veiled after contemplation.

وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ.

Allah does what He will.

However it is incumbent that one should not think, that such ugliness of behaviour can come from such people of the path who are known to belong to Allah the Exalted, have become prominent and well known to be under Allah's the Exalted protection, to receive His support and to have been chosen and drawn near to Him, for Allah guards them against such things and never allows such things to approach them purely out of grace and generosity. On the contrary, one who believes in them should understand that their hearts and their secrets contain infinite goodness, light, unveiling, sciences and wisdom out of which that which shows outwardly is no more than a grain of sand, a drop front the ocean. In this manner, he will be much more able to benefit front them, and their spiritual assistance [*madad*] to him will be higher.

وَفَقَهْنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَإِيَّاكُمْ لِإِصَابَةِ الصَّوَابِ فِي الْنِيَّاتِ وَالْأَعْمَالِ،

وَعَصَمْنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ مِنَ الشَّكِّ وَالرَّتِيابِ فِي جَمِيعِ الْأَحْوَالِ.

“May Allah the Exalted grant us and you success in attaining soundness in both our intentions and actions, and Protect us and you from doubt and suspicion in all these situations.”

وَرَزَقْنَا كَمَالَ الْمُتَابَعَةِ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ بِالْعُدُوِّ وَالْأَصَالِ.

“And bestow on our perfection in following His Messenger, May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family And companions in the morning and evening.”

فَسْمَعْ بِحَمْدٍ

A Question from al-Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Abdullah BaRajaa

Question (71)

The scholarly al-Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Abdullah BaRajaa, may Allah benefit us from him, asked Imam al-Haddad concerning the verses (referring to its meaning) from the Sheikh Abi Ali Al-Ruzubari, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and we benefit from him.

فَقُلْتُ خِلْعَةَ سَاقِي، حُبْهُ جُرِعَا
فَقَلْبُ بَرِي إِلْفَهُ الْأَعْيَادِ وَالْجُمَعَا
يَوْمَ التَّرْوَارِ فِي التَّوْبِ الَّذِي خَلَعَا
وَالْعِيدُ مَا كُنْتَ لِي مَرَأِي وَمُسْتَمْعَا

قَالُوا غَدَّا الْعِيدُ مَاذَا أَنْتَ لَابْسَهُ
فَقَرَرْ وَصَرِّ هُمَا ثَوْبَاهِي تَحْتَهُمَا
أَخْرَى الْمَلَابِسِ أَنْ تَلَقَّى الْحَبِيبِ بِهِ
الدَّهْرِ لِي مَأْتِمٌ إِنْ غَيْتَ يَا أَمْلِي

“They said, “Tomorrow is the Feast, what will you wear?”

I said, “The gift of the pourer whose love I had gulped down,”
“Poverty and Patience are the two garments beneath which
Is a heart beholding its comfort in Feasts and Fridays.”

“No clothes are more suited to meet the Beloved in
On visiting day than the garment, He has bestowed”
“Time passes in mourning in Your absence, O my Hope!
The Feast is when You come to be seen and heard.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him, and cause us to benefit from his blessings in his answer said, “What we shall say is very brief.”

As for his saying, may Allah bestow benefits on us from him,
“They said: ‘Tomorrow is the feast, what will you wear?’” It is possible that ‘they’ refers to his brothers on the Path.

Their saying to him, “Tomorrow is the feast” is an indication that contemplation is to occur.

While his saying: “The gift of the pourer (the one who pours)” may mean that Allah had bestowed upon him the Vice-Regency

[*Khilafa*], the Pourer is the gnostic who pours the sciences and gnosis, knowledge of spiritual mysteries, for the servants of Allah the Exalted to drink, by Allah's the Exalted order.

As to the phrase, “Whose love I have gulp down” is a reference to the endurance of hardships on the path of Allah the Exalted and that those who revere their Lord significantly receive a high share.

The meaning of his saying, “No cloths is more suited...” is to be found in the saying of the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, on behalf of Allah the Exalted,

مَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ الْمُتَقَرِّبُونَ بِمِثْلِ أَدَاءِ مَا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ.

“Those who draw nearer to Me do so with nothing better than that which I made obligatory on them...” (Hadith).

As for his saying, “Poverty and Patience are the two garments,” ‘Garment of poverty’ is the bestowal of pure slave-hood. ‘Garment of patience’ is worn by all those who know the world and is removed from them at the time of death.

As for his saying, “A heart beholding is comforted during days of Feasts and Fridays,” bears two interpretations.

The first and more likely one is that he wishes to preserve his conformity with the Law [*sharia*] while in the eye of realities and this ease the Friday reunions for the prayer and the feasts will be those that Muslims are familiar.

The second meaning refers to the hours of contemplation and the times of Presence that a certain gnostic once spoke about this, “A serene moment with Allah the Exalted is better than a thousand accepted pilgrimage.”

And as for his saying, “Time passes in mourning in your absence. . .” was explained by Shaykh ibn Ata illah in the book “*Hikam*” thus, “Felicity, even though varied in its manifestations, is due only to the vision of Him and His nearness. And suffering, even though varied in its manifestations, is due only to the presence of His veil.”

Sheikh Abu Yazid, may Allah be pleased with him and grant us to benefit from him said, “In the garden are men who were the Real to veil Himself from them for as long as the batting of an eyelid, would cry out to be saved from the Garden as those who are in the Fire cry out to be saved from the Fire.”

These explanations are not complete had we be granted permission to speak, we would have given free rein to our pen, but to each thing its measure.

It is a remarkable coincidence that a few days before your letter arrived, we had written to one of our friends in Allah the Exalted,

“You should know, my brother, that Allah Transcendent and High is He, has servants whose feasts never end and to whom spiritual assistance [*madad*] never stops, because of the nights of nearness to their Lord which they experience in their hearts and the pleasure of intimacy in His Holy proximity. The feast is for them to maintain their conformity to His Will, purify themselves from the soiling of disobedience, and be continuously present with Allah the Exalted at all times.”

One of them has said,

“Time passes in mourning in Your absence, O my hope!

The Feast is when You come to be seen and heard.”

End of quote.



Collections of Questions from the Virtuous Sayyid Ahmad bin Awad Ba Hussain BaAlawi

Question (72)

The virtuous Sayyid Ahmad bin Awad Ba Hussain BaAlawi asked Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him, “Is the Sheikh AbdulQadir al-Jilani more superior or the sheikh Imam al-Faqih al-Muqaddam Muhammad bin ‘Ali BaAlawi? May Allah benefit us from them. Ameen. May Allah cause us to achieve the facts through their knowledge, be please with them and on the authority of the rest of the righteous, to the end of his question.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be satisfied with him and reward him, us and the Muslims the best of rewards, answered, “You should know, may Allah the Exalted be your teacher, that Sheikh AbdulQadir, may Allah be pleased with him, is one of those to whom Allah the Exalted gave both outward [*azZahir*] and inward [*albatin*] knowledge, the practice of the method to achieve the path to Allah, the Exalted [*suluk tariqa*], the contemplation of reality [*shuhud haqiqा*] and the education of disciples [*murid*]. He became the Central Pole [*Qutb*] and Ghauth [*Reliever*] of his time, and this was confirmed by many authorities. He died many years before our master and leader Muhammad bin Ali Ba‘Alawi, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, who was the sheikh of both method [*tariqa*] and reality [*haqiqा*], the leader of both the people of the outward [*zahir*] and inward [*batin*], the Lordly Pole [*al-Qutb al-Rabbani*], the Foremost Jurist [*al-Faqih al-Muqadām*], and it is on him, after Allah the Exalted and His Messenger, that we depend.

Both *al-Faqih al-Muqadām* and Sheikh AbdulQadir were great leaders, may Allah be pleased with them, they were most comprehensive leaders [*imam*] poles [*qutb*], honourable [*sharif*] Sunni and both are among the superior, outstripping and drawn-nigh men.

However, we benefit and depend from al Sayyid al Muqaddam is greater in evidence because he is both a father and a sheikh, as well

as being the one around whom everything in this region revolves whether for us or others.

Similarly, Sheikh Abu Madyan, may Allah be pleased with him, was a great comprehensive leader who, according to certain gnostic [*arif*] was made a Pole. Thus, Polehood [*qutbiyyah*] was transferred from Sheikh AbdulQadir to Sheikh Abu Madyan then to al-faqih al-Muqaddam in this order but not in immediate succession. The period was long, and many Poles may have intervened between each of them and the other. Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, knows better the reality of the matters.

Our master, Sheikh and leader AbdurRahman bin Muhammad al-Saqqaf, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Next to the Companions we concede superiority to no one over al-Faqih alMuqaddam, except those whose superiority explicitly recorded in the narration by the Prophet [*warid*] like that of Uwais Al Qaryani.

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنِ الْجَمِيعِ، وَرَضِيَ عَنَّا بِهِمْ وَأَمْدَنَا بِهِمْ.

May Allah the Exalted be pleased with them, and with us for their sake, and may He grant us spiritual assistance [*madad*] through them!

Question (73)

The mentioned Sayyid also asked Imam al-Haddad, “Who is the disciple [*murid*]? And about is the ‘*Sufi*’ and what is *Sufism* [*tasawwuf*]? And what does a man do to become a *Sufi*?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and may we benefit from him, answered, “You should know that the disciple [*murid*] is he in whom the desire for the Face of Allah the Exalted and the Last Abode have overwhelmed his every outward and inward movement, whether for his worldly or afterlife, and this is a matter of formidable order when sound and firm on the path [*istiqama*], so reflect on it!

As for the *Sufi*, a certain gnostic [*Arifin*] once said that the *Sufi* is he who had become clear [*safi*] from turbidity, filled with the lessons

of wisdom, freed by Allah the Exalted from needing others, and for whom gold and dust had become equal.

Sufism [*tasawwuf*] was said by another to be an “exit from every base attribute and entry into every sublime one.”

Much controversy has arisen between the people of the Path around what *Sufism* and the *Sufi*. What we have just quoted is among the best and most comprehensive said about the subject.

The complete or perfect *Sufi* is the one who purifies his actions, speech, intentions and character from the blemishes of hypocrisy and frees them from anything that might arouse the Master Allah’s anger, who heads towards Allah, the Exalted with the whole of his outward and inward, obey Him, turns away from all others detaches himself from all other preoccupations such as family, wealth, passionate desires, worldly things and whims which are likely to distract him from devoting himself entirely to this matter, and who then adds to this knowledge, adherence to the Book [*Quran*], Prophetic Traditions [*Sunna*] and example of the virtuous predecessors [*salaf salleh*].

وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانُهُ وَتَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, knows best.

Question (74)

The mentioned *Sayyid* also asked Imam al-Haddad, about travelling the path [*suluk*] and its meaning, and about mystical experiences (*المنازل*) [*munazalat*] and divine action (*الاصطلاح*) [*istilam*] such as talk about by the people of the Path [*tariqa*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, and he pleased with Him, and may Allah provide us assistance through his divine support [*madad*] answered, “*Suluk* or travelling, is the progression of the heart in manners of the realization and reinforcing of the real attributes of faith [*iman*], and the stations [*maqam*] and conditions of certitude, moving in that way from one position to

another and ascending from one station to the next, from the beginning to the end. The secret inward [*batin*] movement on an inward [*batin*] path.

By mystical experiences [*munazalat*] they mean the divine inspirations which Allah bestows upon the secrets and the hearts.

As for divine action [*istilam*], they mean it to be powerful Divine practices [*warid*] that overwhelm the servant to such an extent as to deprive him of his sensory perceptions and feelings totally, and this is a rare occurrence and when it does happen it does not last for very long, however, when it does it makes its man join those subject to mystical experiences [*majdhubs*] who are people of passionate love and exclusive attachment to Allah.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَم

And He knows best!



A Question from Abdul Qadir bin Muhammad al-Ahdal al-Yemeni al-Hussaini

Question (75)

The scholarly *Sayyid AbdulQadir bin Muhammad al-Ahdal al Yemeni al Hussaini*, may Allah make us benefit from him, asked Imam al-Haddad, about the practice of invoking blessings and peace on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, after the Call to the ritual prayer [*azan*] and about other actions which will become apparent from the Imam's answer.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, said in his answer, "Your letter has arrived in which you mention that an argument took place concerning the person who makes the Call for prayer [*Muazzin*] invoking blessings on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, after the Call [*azan*] and raising their voices in the manner that we are used to, that you quoted on this subject the words of Sheikh Safiy al-Din ibn Hajar in his book "*Sharh al-Adab*", and that some people raised objections to which you provided a reply in the form of that blessed essay which we found appropriate. May Allah reward you well.

Then you quoted the straightforward question which you put to the sheikh, the man of purity, the Mufti of Islam Ahmad bin 'Umar al-Hubaishi and to which he gave a correct and profitable answer. May Allah reward his effort.

You forwarded all of these to us together with the letter, I mean the quotation from Sheikh ibn Hajar, the study that follows it, the reply to the objection, and the said question and answer, and you requested us to give you what opinion we had on that, for comfort and confirmation. Although, the study you made and the explanation of Sheikh Ahmad al-Hubayshi are complete and sufficient.

Therefore, it is only for the benediction and good omen that result from our speaking of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and of his right, which can neither be ignored nor denied.

That is to say the Prophet's right upon his community, may blessings and peace be upon him, is the greatest, and after that of Allah the Exalted, the most obliging and certain. This right is impossible to fulfil whatever one may do or expend. There is nothing that is within our ability to attempt to fulfill this obligation except to conform to his *Sunna*, defend his religion, invoke blessings and peace upon him in abundance and have for him, his family, and his companions' total love, attachment, honour and reverence.

As for invoking blessings and peace upon him, Allah the Exalted says in His Noble Book commands His servant to do so,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلِّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيْمًا.

“Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet, O you that believe! Send your blessings on him and salute him with all respect.”¹

Numerous sound and reliable hadiths recorded exhorting to this and mentioning its merits, these are very well known everywhere and so are the many sayings [*Atsar*] of both ancient and recent men of Allah.

Both are so familiar that there is no need to quote them. Sheikh ibn Hajar, the second wrote a unique book on this subject which he called “The Arrayed Pearls in Invoking Blessings and Peace on the Possessor of the Praiseworthy Station” [*Al-Durr at-Mandud fil Salati wal Salami ala Sahibil Maqamil Mahmud*]. Before him, al-Sakhawi wrote a book on the same subject called “The wonderful saying in invoking a blessing on the intercessor beloved” [*alqaul albadie fi alsalat alaa alhabib alshafie*] and the writings of both the ancients and their successors among the community's leading scholars, particularly the books of hadiths are full of the same subject.

As for that which some *muazzin* do in some areas after making the call [*azan*] for some or all the prayers, that is an excellent innovation [*bidaa hasanah*] worthy of approval, which none can object to since we were commanded in the Book [*Quran*] and Sunna

¹ Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 56.

to invoke blessings and peace upon the Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and this is not confined to specific circumstances, time or place. Indeed, on some occasion and situations were expressly mentioned where the reward is increased, and the wage more generous. Still, the command and its merits remain valid at all circumstances and situations, whether silently or aloud, alone or in a group. None of that can in itself be objected to, and no objections can be raised without evidence from the Book or Sunna, and no such evidence was ever transmitted. Therefore, their objecting statement must crumble, and nothing remains with him to use as an argument, for the time which follows the call [*azan*] is one where the invocation of blessings and peace on the Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him is required, as is to be found in sound hadiths.

That this is done loudly by the *muazzin* so that those who belong to the Prophet's community, may peace be upon him, whether those who are awake or those who are not being reminded of it, is an increase in goodness and benefaction.

This reminding of the invocation of blessings and peace on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him after the call [*azan*] in the manner that you mentioned habitual to the inhabitants of the Two Noble Sanctuaries [*Haramin Syarifin*] before each prayer except Sunset [*Maghrib*] because of the lack of time and Dawn [*Fajr*] where they do it before the *azan*. It is also done in our country, Hadhramaut, but not at all times and in all areas. However, were it to be done after each azan, I do not think that anyone would deny or object to it.

Indeed, whoever would deny such a blessed action or object to it in itself? Allah forbid! Many *muazzin* also recite the noble verse that you mentioned,

“Allah and His angels bless the Prophet.” إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يَصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
after the azan is finished

There is no doubt that to mention him, may blessings and peace be upon him, to praise him, and relate his merits and virtues as that

reminder does, together with invoking blessings and peace upon him, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, are among the greatest of devotions and the most important acts of worship.

They strengthen, reinforce faith and increase the love and reverence for the Messenger of Allah, may blessings and peace be upon him, in both the reminder and those believers who listen to him. They also enrage and humiliate those hypocrites and disbelievers who detest him, may the best of blessings and peace be upon him.

What possible excuse remains for the one who denies such an act with all its benefits and profits and other merits which Allah the Transcendent and Exalted, has promised those who invoke blessings and peace on His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, such as that none, among his community invokes blessings on him once that Allah, Eminent and Majestic is He, blesses that person ten times, and the same for invoking peace.

If the person who has objected has done so to the very idea of this reminding, then he is ignorant and mistaken, of less consequence than to be addressed and too ignorant to be taught.

وَلَيْسَ يُصْحِحُ فِي الْأَفْهَامِ شَيْءٌ إِذَا احْتَاجَ النَّهَارُ إِلَى وَأَدَلِيلٍ.

Nothing can be soundly understood if daylight itself needs proof.

If the person has objected to the [*selawat*] invocation after every azan and the custom in your area is to do it at only some period such as after Jumaat and so on, as is done over in Hadhramaut, then his objection is natural for he would have objected to that which he is not used to and finds challenging to accept and such things often happen with people of formalities who are under the sway of habits and customs.

If he has objected not to the matter itself but, because it disturbs people in prayer and other similar activities then, if this is true, he has a point, and this is similar to reciting the Quran aloud during audible prayers, as will not be difficult for you to see. You have not mentioned whether explicitly or implicitly who the man is who has objected, what kind of person he is and of which rank.

There is a purpose in mentioning him, and one's statements on the matter would differ accordingly, for some people are fanatics, others are jealous of the speaker and object, because of their envy, to that which they would not have objected to had it come from another person. Others affect ignorance and others still should not have been addressed in the first place. People are of many categories and it is of some use to specify to which he belongs.

You have also not mentioned which kind of reminding is customary in your area, is it done at some of the prayer period or all of them after each *azan*? There would have been some use in that.

It may be that the objections of this man grew stronger after you gave him your answer, which is true but involves a certain amount of disparagement and humiliation.

If that answer had been produced after you had explained to him with gentleness and subtlety and he had refused to accept then indulged over criticism and disparagement, then you were right and have done well, may Allah reward your effort. However, I advise you to be as subtle and gentle as possible whenever enjoining good or forbidding evil; in this manner, one's advice is more likely to be accepted and more effective in settling seditious subjects and closing all doors to antagonism and division. It is this that we were ordered to do in the Law. And in a hadith narration,

مَا كَانَ الرَّفِيقُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ. وَمَا كَانَ الْحَرْقُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ.

“Gentleness when present in anything embellishes it, and rudeness when present in anything disgraces it.”

أَنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفِيقَ.
“Indeed, Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, is Gentle and likes gentleness.”

There is nothing in ‘gentleness’ that is not good.



**Collection of Questions from the scholarly Sheikh
Ahmad bin AbuBakr Ba Syiban Fadhl, who was
a resident in the town of Balqom in India**

Question (76)

The Sheikh Ahmad Ba Syiban Fadhl, who passed away in India asked Imam al-Haddad, “In Islam, why is backbiting considered to be worse than thirty adultery offences although it was not considered (by most scholars) as a full major sin as adultery?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, may we rejoice and benefit from him, answered, “This is not due to backbiting is worse than adultery as far as outward appearances are concerned, for adultery is obvious to be an evil act which leads to the confusion of lineages and other corruptions, but to the motive behind infidelity being merely lust which is a degrading attribute, while the reason behind backbiting and dishonouring Muslims is malice in the heart, gossip and lying toward the slandered Muslim. These are demonic attributes and are up to thirty times worse and more loathsome than degrading traits, as narrated in the hadith, provided it is soundly transmitted.

It has also been transmitted that backbiting is worse than adultery, but no (specific) number was mentioned. The fact that backbiting is worse than adultery as relating to the rights of creatures is evident. It has stated in a weak transmission,

إِنَّ الْفِلْسَ الْوَاحِدَ مِنْ مُظَالِمِ الْعِبَادِ يَعْخُذُ فِيهِ سَبْعِمَائَةٍ صَلَاةً مَقْبُولَةً.

“Indeed, one *fils* (small monetary denomination) worth of injustice to Allah’s servant wiped out seven hundred accepted ritual prayers.”

The wronging of servants of Allah is an action that which is never left unpunished.

As for adultery, its account is a fraction of the adulterer’s sin, just as may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and his family said,

“And no bird but your bird.”

وَلَا طَيْرٌ إِلَّا طَيْرُكَ.

وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah, Transcendent is Allah, and Exalted knows best.

Question (77)

The above mentioned scholarly also asked Imam al-Haddad about whether the believers among the jinn. “Do they have any share of insight of gnosis [arif] in the divine existence?” “And the vision (of Allah) do they to enter the Garden?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, may we benefit from him, answered, “You should know that the knowledgeable Sheikh Abdul Wahhab al-Sharani the Egyptian, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, mentioned that jinn, meaning the believers among them, had a share in the divine knowledge and that the people had posed to him specific questions on that subject and he had written a book entitled, ‘The Removal of the Veil in the Questions about Jinns’ [Kashf al-Ran ‘an As ilat al-Jan] and I have indeed come across his book.

Concerning the vision of Allah, the Exalted in the Garden, you should know that there are differences of opinion regarding whether the believers among jinn enter the Garden or not? It has been stated that no specific proof exists as to the Jinns believers entering the Garden, and this view was supported only by generalities which were not accepted by those who held that they did enter.

The knowledge belongs to Allah, Eminent and Majestic is He, however, what is evident to me is that the believers among the Jinns enter the Garden and in it see the Lord.

إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

Allah the Exalted willing.

Question (78)

The above mentioned Sheikh Ba Syiban also asked Imam al-Haddad, whether a man who has no progeny should keep in mind when praying for his progenies [*dhurriyya*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, may our needs be fulfilled from his lives, answered, “The word progeny [*dhurriyya*] is used to designate one’s children and their descendants and one’s parents or ancestors, however far back they go. An example of the second instance is His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَسْخُونِ .

“And a Sign for them is that We bore their progeny [*dhurriyya*] through the Flood in the loaded Ark.”¹

When a man who has no progeny [*dhurriyya*] according to the first meaning prays, he should intend all his ancestors and also his descendants, for if he is without children at that time may be still within the realm of the possible. It is hardly conceivable that a living human being, even though impotent, maybe definitely sure that he will have no descendants in the future, for the possibility remains open to him; it only becomes impossible when he dies.

There is no harm for a childless man to pray for his children and mean his siblings and near relatives’ children for they are as if own. Similarly, a scholar of virtue may intend by his prayer those who learn from him and follow his example.

وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ .

And Allah, Transcendent is Allah, and Exalted knows best.

Question (79)

The above mentioned Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about the sprouting of people before the resurrection.

¹ Surah 36 Ya Sin Verse 41.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, may we benefit from him, answered, “It seems that they will be outside the earth but connected to it like plants. There is no contradiction between this and His saying, Exalted is He,

ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَّا كُمْ دَعْوَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ.

“Then, when He calls you once, out of the earth, you shall come forth.”¹

For what is meant here is a second coming forth with spirits and bodies,

“Hastening, with eyes transfixed, towards the Caller!”² and that is different from the first coming forth.

Similarly, there is nothing unlikely in their standing on the Bridge [*sirat*] after the earth is changed, if the tradition relating to that is sound, for it will then stand there. Allah the Exalted may, should He so wish, enlarge it then render it very thin so that the crossing becomes a trial and a test of sincerity.

The term Bridge may also designate things other than that which overhang Hell.

أَعَذُّنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ.

May Allah the Exalted protect us and you from it.

وَالْأَمْرُ وَاسِعٌ وَمُلْكُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَوْسَعٌ
وَالْقُدْرَةُ وَالْعِلْمُ إِلَهِيَّانِ وَأَوْسَعٌ.

The matter is vast, the Kingdom of Allah, the Exalted greater,
And Divine Ability and Knowledge wider still.

¹ Surah 30 Ar Rum Verse 25

² Surah 54 Al Qamar Verses 6 – 8.

يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعَ إِلَىٰ شَيْءٍ لُّكْكِيٍّ. حُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَرْجُوونَ مِنَ الْأَجَادِيثِ كَأَهْمَمْ حَرَادٌ مُّسْتَشِرٌ. مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ.
“The Day that the Caller will call (them) to a terrible affair. They will come forth, their eyes humbled from their graves, torpid like locusts scattered abroad, Hastening, with eyes transfixed, towards the Caller!”

Question {80}

The above mentioned Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about how can a man enter the Garden from all eight gates.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and may the Muslims gain success through him and may we benefit from him, answered, “If the gates are scattered along the Garden’s surrounding wall he will enter from one of them and the others will be open for him as an honour and an added dignity. That is, they will all be open for him to enter from whichever he chooses.

I have seen this mentioned by some scholars, may Allah the Exalted show them Mercy. And in the hadith concerning what is to be said after the ritual purification [*wudu*] says,

فُتَحَتْ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ الشَّمَائِيَّةِ يَدْخُلُ مِنْ أَيَّهَا شَاءَ.

“The eight gates of the Garden are open for him to enter from whichever he chooses.”

Do look it up, and the meaning there is clear, and it is that which is easier to understand.

And if the gates of the Garden are layers on top of each other in degrees. If the gates are eight, each tier above the other, then the meaning would be that he has reached the highest Garden by going through all of the eight gates which are those of the Garden’s tiers.

وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, knows best.

Question {81}

The person mentioned above, meaning, Sheikh Ba Syiban also asked Imam al-Haddad, whether the *hadith* concerning the resurrection of arrogant people in the form of small specks of dust and that of others in ways equivalent to those ugly attributes which were theirs in the world should be taken at face value or had other meanings.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, may please with us through him, answered, “There is nothing to prevent this from happening as described and one should not incline toward other meanings when it can occur as in the mentioned hadiths. When the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, was asked how the damned would walk on their faces to the Fire? Then he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الَّذِي أَمْشَاهُمْ عَلَى أَرْجُلِهِمْ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يُمْشِيهِمْ عَلَى وَجْهِهِمْ.

“The ‘One’ who made them walk on their feet can cause them to walk on their faces.”

Therefore, you should understand what is meant here is to indicate the vastness of the Lord’s Divine Ability. Unless the matter involves that which is considered either by the intellect or the Law to be impossible.

Question (82)

The mentioned Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about the saying of our master Imam al-Ghazali may Allah have mercy on him and make us benefit from him and his books, “Not everyone has a heart.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, “He, may Allah show him Mercy and make others benefit from him, meant the real heart that understands and comprehends what it receives from Allah the Exalted, and this is a noble reality which finds its support in the formal heart of flesh which everyone has. To the same meaning do those words of Allah the Exalted refer,

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ.

“Verily in that is a Message for whoever has a heart.”¹

That is a heart that comprehends what it receives from Allah, the Exalted. While in another verse Allah confirms their possession of the

¹ Surah 50 Qaf Verse 37.

formal heart but denies them the comprehension which is the real purpose and aim of it, so He, Exalted is He, says,

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَقْعُدُونَ بِهَا.

“They have hearts but comprehend not with them.”

This explanation is what was available for us to quote at the present moment with no previous reflection or deliberation. It is the inspiration of the moment and the overflow of grace, the effect of the support provided by the interpretation of the mystery of the meaning, “And We taught him of Our Knowledge,” وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا.

Everything that we have is from this Comprehensive Presence, had we wished we would have said much more, but we have come to the time and era that is enough for you to see and know. However, if there is a specific person, it is incumbent that he should be given according to an answer according to his nature and degree of status and not subjected to the generalities appropriate for the general public.

And even if there are many, let not the momentary illusions prevent you from asking questions, for we shall answer whenever times allow as we should rightly do, and in the manner that is most profitable and preferable. We shall thus be with you, and you shall be with us in the best and most appropriate way in the unconditioned Presence.

Question {83}

The above mentioned Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about the return of his spirit to him, may blessings and peace be upon him, whenever a Muslim of his community salutes him so that he may answer him, as in the hadith,

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and assist us through him, replied, “There is nothing obscure in that. It means that what returns is a specific faculty of the spirit concerned with the perception of the Messenger, may blessings and peace be

upon him, of the salute of those of his community who salute him. Here a term was used to express part of its meaning, as is often done.

Some scholars have said that this return implies, of necessity that his spirit, may blessings and peace be upon him, be continuously present in his magnificent body, because there is not one moment in existence without one of his community saluting him, and this is a correct opinion but of limited scope compared with the scope of the people of vast inspirational sciences drawn from the Divine Presences. However, what we have mentioned will be sufficient for you, by the Will of God the Exalted.

Question (84)

The mentioned Sheikh Ba Syiban also asked Imam al-Haddad, about when the forms of the people of the Garden and those of the Fire will change into beauty or ugliness or other attributes that were mentioned in the hadith.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and he will Allah, and provide us provision with his pleasure, answered, "Allah knows best, I recall that it is after the Divine Judgment is passed, which will be based upon the people of the Garden having upheld the Divine commands and the people of the Fire having neglected them, that either the Garden or the Fire will become their inevitable fate. That is the time when each of the two groups will be sent to their final abode. It would be near enough to say that it is at the moment of their entry into the Garden or the Fire.

Question (85)

Then mentioned Sheikh asked Imam al-Haddad, whether it was permissible for one man to have more than one sheikh, and about other matters as will be mentioned.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, said in his answer that the questions you have asked needs a lengthy

exposition which the present time does not allow, we shall, therefore, discourse on them in the briefest terms that will fulfill our purpose and clarify them.

Yes, it is permissible on condition that no contradiction or opposition exists between the several methods of their path [*tariqas*], that no differences exist between them and that they are all people of truthfulness and fair-mindedness. Depending on just one is the reliably sound thing to do and is in most cases necessary. Were he to forbid you to meet others and take from them, this would become obligatory and to do otherwise would mean ruin since the success of the disciple [*murid*] may be dependent upon it (obeying his sheikh). It does not befitting of a disciple [*murid*] to do otherwise while still in his state [*hal*] of weakness at the beginning of his entering the path [*tariqa*]; this is more conducive to his heart being collected and his aspiration abundant. We have mentioned some of that toward the end of the “Book of the Disciple [*Risalatul Murid*],”¹ so look it up there.

Question {86}

The Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about a particular ruling concerning audition [*Sama*] which question will appear clearer from the answer.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and may we benefit from his answer, said, “Listen to poetry, audition or similar recital, when in the presence of a sheikh who is a master, when those presences are with his permission and conform to the conditions he imposes on those in attendance, and they all believe in the sheikh and raise no objections to him, then everyone present will be under the protection of his spiritual state [*maqam*], power of resolution and enveloping solicitude.

¹ Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker [*Risalatul Murid*].

Question (87)

The mentioned Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about the first step that a disciple [murid] takes on the path of Allah the Exalted.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and may we benefit from his answer, said, “It is the Step of Repentance [Taubah]. There are other things which should precede and follow it. In the early chapters of the ‘Book of the Disciple’ [Risalatul Murid] are indications to that effect.

Question (88)

The Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad, about what happens when the disciple [murid] commits himself entirely to the sheikh.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, and may we benefit from him, answered, “It is for the sheikh to consider the disciple’s [murid] case and do what he believes best, more beneficial and elevating for him, for he is a trust that Allah the Exalted entrusted to him.

The states of the disciples [murid] differ a great deal in that respect, and the disciple [murid] has to accept whatever counsel the sheikh gives him. Whatever state [hal] the sheikh establishes the disciple [murid] in, whether outwardly or inwardly, without adding anything of his preference.

Question (89)

The Sheikh also asked Imam al-Haddad about the difference between the Unseen and the visible realms and about other issues.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, “The Domain of the Visible [Alam al-Shahada] is that which can be perceived through the five senses, whereas the Domain of the Unseen [Alam Ghaib] is that which lies beyond that. It is those things of Allah the Exalted which people with sound minds should

accept, those hearts which possessed of certainty believe, and which the Prophets of Allah the Exalted and His Saints [Wali] contemplate with their inner sight according to the will of Allah the Exalted.

As for the worlds of the Divine Realm [Lahut], Human Realm [Nasut] and Realm of Power [Jabarut], you should know that the World of Divine Realm [Lahut] is that part of the Unseen where nothing but purely Divine matters are to be seen.

The world of the Human Realm [Nasut] is the part that opposes it, where subtle spiritual human matters are to be seen.

The world of the Realm of Power [Jabarut] is that part of the Unseen where appear those Divine matters related to the realities of Invincibility, severe chastisement, swift revenge, the utmost in Loftiness and Independence and other such things.

This reply is, in summary, what we have understood and extracted from the leading authorities in this field. Understand it as it should be understood and reflect on it as it deserves.

وَاللَّهُ الْمُؤْفِقُ وَالْمَعِينُ.

Allah grants success and assistance.



A Question from Sheikh Ahmad bin Abdullah Ba Sharahil

Question {90}

The scholarly Sheikh Ahmad bin Abdullah Ba Sharahil asked Imam al-Haddad, “About what Abi Muhammad Sahl bin Abdullah, may Allah the Exalted show him mercy and because of him cherish us mercy said, “Every act that the servant does, whether it be one of obedience or disobedience, without following an example, is sustenance for the soul, while each act done following an example is suffering to the soul.” How can one follow an example in disobedience?” End of Quote.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and reward him well for the Muslims, and answered him, “First of all, you should know that the term soul as used by the Sufis, may Allah make us benefit from them refers to a subtle body in human beings, the nature of which is to prefer immediate comforts. It is by nature, attracted to perishable things. What they mean by its ‘suffering’ is to discipline the self to conform to the Book and the *Sunna*, which is a condition for correct travelling [*suluk*] the path. This ‘suffering’ is to strive [*mujaahid*] guiding the self to make it follow the truth, avoid falsehood and shun all that is unnecessary. They consider this is struggling to be nothing but felicity itself both immediate and as an end state. They only call it suffering as a concession to the level of ordinary people that they may understand what they mean.

Since to strictly follow the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, is the very behaviour which encompasses the totality of what is intended, the people, may Allah be pleased with them and make us benefit from them, are of all people those who show the most significant concern and care for it. They give no credit, may Allah allow people to benefit from them to anyone whose activities or moments of stillness, both outward and inward do not conform to the Book and Sunna. Sahl, may Allah show him mercy,

by saying “Every act...‘till the end of the Quote’,” is warning that to abandon conformity, even while engaged in doing something which the soul is not by its nature inclined to, such as obedience, strengthens and arouses its passionate desires [*syahwat*], while every act that conforms to the Book and *Sunna* even if the action is one that the soul is by nature inclined to, such as sins and pleasurable but unnecessary things, puts it through the enormous hardship. That is because following the Messenger Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, is the truth. The truth is opposed to whimsical desire, and the soul is a prisoner of its desires [*nasf*]; it tends to agree with them and is inclined to follow them.

The soul is also, by a hidden secret made to detest being forced by anyone into subservience and submission and loves to be given free rein in all matters and to act independently; it holds that none should have power over it. Therefore it detests following anyone, even in that which accords with its nature, and it tends not to conform, even in avoiding that which it is opposed to, as we have mentioned before.

As for the meaning of following an example in disobedience, we must first, for the sake of courtesy, mention the purpose following an example in obedience. In acts of obedience, it means performing then solely for the sake of Allah the Exalted in a manner that conforms outwardly and inwardly to knowledge and courtesy.

As for permissible issues, it is to take and use whatever is to be used in the belief that it is lawful and the intention of using it to fulfill the rights of Allah the Exalted.

As for abandoning sins, it is to discontinue them because one is ashamed before Allah the Exalted, in reverence for Him and fear of His punishment.

As for its meaning in committing sins, if his destiny is to commit them, it is not to do so deliberately, experience any joy or persist in them. It is also to hide them from people and make haste to

repent to the King, the Real, fearful of being asked to account or be punished for them.

This reply is not a complete clarification of Sahl's words, may Allah make people to benefit from him, for they contain comprehensive meanings and profitable courtesies. Still, it is by the Will of Allah the Exalted, informative and sufficient. The best of speeches is that which is brief and informative. Any of their utterances can never be fully explained in less than a volume or more by those who be familiar with their science, so take heed. O people of insight!

وَقُنْنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَإِيَّاكُمْ لِإِصَابَةِ الصَّوَابِ.

May Allah the Exalted grant us and you success in hitting the mark!

وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ.

“And to Allah do all affairs return.”¹



¹ Surah 57 al -Hadid Verse 5. Do take note that there are seven verses in various chapters ending with this phrase.

Collection of Questions from Ahmad bin Muhammad Al Ghasham Al Zaidi

Question (91)

Ahmad bin Muhammad Al Ghasham Al Zaidi asked Imam al-Haddad what his opinion is concerning the act of created beings?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him and spread his benefits in Islam, answered, “You should know, may Allah grant you success, that our school of thought [*mazhab*], our belief which we hold before Allah the Exalted is that nothing good or evil, beneficial or harmful, happens other than by Allah’s decree [*qadr*] and will [*iradat*]. That which He wills ‘is’ and that which he does not is ‘not’. There are, to support this, more textual evidence from the Book [*Quran*] and the Sunna and more logical proofs for anyone possessed of insight than can be numbered. The books that our leading scholars have written on the ‘Principles of Religion’ overflow with these and they are in your hands.

Our school of thoughts [*mazhab*] is intermediary between two others. One of which is that of the Fatalist [*Jabariyya*] which states that people are forced to act as they do, that they are, under all circumstances, subdued and overpowered, and that their actions are thus no different from those of the absent-minded or the coerced, or even those insane or asleep. This position could be seen to be rationally false, also if no proof advanced to this effect.

The Second is ‘those that stand apart’ [*Mutazilite*] position that people’s actions originate in them by choice; they act when they so wish and refrain when they so want.

Our position is what every person knows about himself, for no rational man is unaware of the difference between that part of his behaviour which is inescapable and which he is forced into and that part which is by choice yet in which he is not altogether independent.

The view mentioned above from our school of thoughts [*mazhab*] that nothing whatsoever happens except by Allah’s the

Exalted Will and decree must be our belief and no faith can be sound without it.

We nevertheless like and praise obedient people, urge them to show more zeal in obedience, warn them against falling into disobedience, and hold that Allah the Exalted will reward them.

And similarly, we dislike the disobedient, urge them away from sin and into obedience, and hold that Allah the Exalted will punish them. We carry out the statutory punishment [*hudud*], present our complaints against injustice to the rulers, enjoin good and forbid evil. And we consider it to be one of the greatest sins for a sinner to reply when asked why he has sinned that it was Allah's will and decree.

To accept contentedly Allah's the Exalted decree is an obligatory necessity for us, and it means taking everything that He, the Exalted does as favours from Him and justice.

As part of contentment is that the heart should remain serene when losses in lives or wealth occur, or hardships and anxieties arise, whereas contentment with sins we hold as a major sin.

Question {92}

The above mentioned Al Zaidi also asked Imam al-Haddad, “What is his opinion about those Muslims who fought Ali may Allah honour his countenance?”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him and grant us benefits from him, answered, “You should know that those who rebelled against Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and whom he made battle with during his caliphate were three groups.

The first are those who were present on the ‘People of the Camel’.¹ They were al-Zubair, Talha and Aisha, may Allah be please with them, and the people of Basra. They first gave allegiance, then

¹ The Quarrel broke out when Aisha, peace be upon her, was on a camel.

rebelled against him, seeking revenge for the blood of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. Whose assassination had neither been carried out, ordered nor approved by Ali. However, he accepted the allegiance of those who had perpetrated it and did not turn them over, for the good of the faith and to maintain unity among Muslims at that time. The rebels did not understand these reasons.

The second are those who were at Siffin¹. They were Muawiya, Amru bin Al'Aas and the people of Syria. They had not sworn allegiance to Ali, and they rebelled demanding revenge for Uthman.

The third are those who were at Nahrawan², and there are the *Khawarij*³. They had given him their allegiance and fought with him, then rebelled in rejection of the arbitration that had taken place at Siffin. None of those fought against Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, before he had invited them to meet with him for conciliation and again to accept his authority, and they had refused to do so.

In our view, they are all people who have overstepped their limits, disputed what was not theirs, and rebelled with no evident justification or clear right. However, those of them who rebelled for disputable reasons are better than those who disputed him his authority, desiring it for themselves. Allah knows best and more aware of their intentions and inner thoughts, and our safety lies in saying nothing about them,

“They are a community who has passed away.”⁴ تلَّقَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَّتْ.

Our scholars have stated that al-Zubair and those who were with him, Muawiya and those who were with him, having exercised their judgment, made the wrong decisions, they were thus excusable. Anyhow, the most that can be said about those among the people of

¹ Siffin located on the banks of the Euphrates river, now called Raqqa in Syria was the first Muslim civil war.

² Nahrawan is twelve miles from Baghdad in Iraq.

³ Khawarij refers to those renegades after initially followers of the fourth caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib.

⁴ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 141.

Tauhid who pray and pay their zakat, but rebel against the head of the state is that they are sinners, and in our view, we are not allowed to curse a sinner specifically.

We do not consider the action to amount to disbelief [*kufir*] to rebel against the leader, nor do we think it permissible to curse a specific person except one whom we know died a disbeliever, under no circumstances to be reached by Allah's the Exalted mercy, for example, the Devil. However, there is still no virtue in cursing such people. We allow the cursing of sinners, transgressor and oppressors only in general.

As for Hasan and Husain, may Allah be pleased with them, they were leaders by right and indeed fulfilled the conditions of leadership and were entirely worthy of it.

To Hasan, the “people of decision” among those who were under Imam Ali swore allegiance, following the latter's assassination. When Muawiya and the people of Syria marched against him, he came out to meet them with the people of Iraq. When the two armies drew close to each other Hasan had compassion and pity for the community so that Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled that which his grandfather, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, had said,

إِنَّ ابْنِي هَذَا سَيِّدٌ، وَإِلَيْيِ أَرْجُو يُصْلِحُ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَيْنَ فِتَّيْنِ عَظِيمَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

“This son of mine is a gentleman [*sayyid*]. I hope that through him Allah will bring conciliation between two large factions of Muslims.”

Hasan then deposed himself and pledged his allegiance to Muawiya, having first imposed some conditions on him. Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, died before Muawiya, the latter designated his son, Yazid, as heir and the people gave him their allegiance either willingly or under coercion. Husain, may Allah be please with him, having refused him Yazid allegiance, was written to by the people of Iraq who requested him to come to them and be their leader. He, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted and set out for Iraq.

Yazid then wrote to his deputy in Basra, ‘Ubaidillah bin Ziyad, ordering him to march against Hussain, may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and defeat him. Ubaidillah did this, and the people of Iraq let him do this even though they had at first claimed to pay allegiance to Husain. Husain was killed, a martyr together with some members of his household, may Allah be pleased with them.

Those who kill him, those ordered it, and those who assisted in it we regard as transgressors and violators, may Allah treat them according to His Justice.

Yazid, we do not regard as similar to Muawiya. For Muawiya, may Allah be pleased with him, was a companion, he neither neglected his obligations nor committed offences. In contrast, Yazid was undoubtedly depraved; he abandoned his prayers, murdered people, committed adultery and drank alcohol. His judgment, we leave it to Allah the Exalted.

Question (93)

The mentioned Al Zaidi also asked Imam al-Haddad, “What is your opinion about the gatherings held in your mosques where they sang love poetry to the accompaniment of pleasant tunes and rhythmic melodies?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him and grant us benefits from him, answered, “You should know that we consider those to amount to neither to remembrance [Zikr] nor something similar, they are permissible but to abandon them is better. Poetry was recited in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, at his bidding on occasions, and he may blessings and peace be upon him, sometimes quoted one or two verses. It was recited in his mosque in his presence by Hassan and others. The permissibility of action is established by it being done once, provided no order forbidding it follows.

Although it was never recited accompanied with music in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace

be upon him, if it was allowed without such an accompaniment it should not be forbidden with it unless there is clear evidence from the *Sunna* prohibiting it and this is not mentioned anywhere.

Some eminent and virtuous people, knowing the times and people, their sluggishness in devotion and lack of desire for goodness, see no harm in gathering them for the remembrance of Allah the Exalted and introducing poetry that sound both in its meanings and its form, for souls, are attracted to it, and this leads them to gather for the remembrance of Allah the Exalted. To each man according to his intention and Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, is the One Who sees what is hidden within each person.

And for those who think bad [*suul dhun*] of others and harbour malice will perceive beauty as ugliness and ugliness as beauty. One should be no less than fair and do no less than refrain from passing judgment where the issue is unclear.

Yet for those who do not know the truth should seek it from its people. Everything that contradicts the Book [*Quran*] and *Sunna* is to be rejected, and everything that diverges from the pattern of the virtuous predecessors is evil, whenever the origin divergence is antagonism and stubbornness, for the truth is vast. The permissible [*jawas*] is different from the superior [*fadilah*] and is not the same as the recommended [*mandub*], neither is the recommended the same as the obligatory [*wajib*]. We possess clear insight in our affairs and guidance from our Lord, the Book of Allah [*Quran*] and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, are with us. We are neither ignorant in religious matters, innovators, followers of those passions that lead astray, nor do we put our reason above the religion of Allah the Exalted. We accepted the truth from whoever brings it to us, we conform to it and are not arrogant, and we do not imitate other men.

You should understand the answers we have given to your questions for we have advanced no word but that we have for it unequivocal evidence from the Book of Allah the Exalted, the *Sunna* of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and

the words of the Imam of Guidance [*Mujtahid*], but we have omitted them for the sake of brevity, for the best words are those which are brief yet informative.

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرِشِّدًا.

“He whom Allah, guides will be rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves to stray, for him will you find no protector to lead him to the Right Way.”¹

It seems that you are a fanatical supporter of your school of thought [*mazhab*], that you accept only that which conforms to it and see no truth but there. If that is so, then speaking to you will be useless. Unless you believe that your school is indeed the truth but that the truth is neither confined nor limited to it so that you misjudge those who diverge from it as much as the span of a hand.

If, then there is benefit in speaking to you and it is the hope of this that we have answered you.

One such benefit is that you should not believe that this region is without someone who knows the truth, can express it and fight those who deviate from it with his tongue, sword, lances, help and allies as much as he is able and permitted to do. None can be criticized for being weak or neglectful who has done all that was possible and spent all his energy.

Another is that you, having lived in this city for a time and having claimed that you loved it and loved its people. Now being on the verge of leaving it, it is incumbent that you should not depart harbouring ill-thinking for its people or what you claim you saw them do for they are the People of the House whom Allah the Exalted has purified and made it an obligation on you and all other Muslims to befriend and support.

وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطِ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

“And Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.”²

¹ Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 17.

² Surah 24 An Nur Verse 46.

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكِّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ.

“And my success in my task can only come from Allah. In Him, I trust, and to Him do I turn for help.”¹

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهُدَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِي لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ بِرَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ.

“Praise and thanks be to Allah, who has guided us to this felicity, never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah; indeed, the Messengers of our Lord have come with the truth.”²

سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ.

“Transcendent are You, and we have no knowledge, save what You has taught us: Indeed You Who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom.”³

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

“May Allah bless our master, Muhammad, his family, Companions and grant them peace.”

This reply was dictated on Monday the fourth of Jumadil Awal in the year 1072 of the Emigration of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

فَسْلَمٌ

¹ Surah 11 Hud Verse 88.

² Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 43.

³ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 32.

Collection of Questions from the respectable Sayyid Ahmad bin Awad Ba-Hussain BaAlawi

Question (94)

The respectable Sayyid Ahmad bin Awad Ba-Hussain BaAlawi asked Imam al-Haddad about the meaning of courtesy or manners [*adab*] about those *Sufis* may Allah be pleased with them?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “They said different issues about it, the gist of which is that a man should keep to the limits imposed by his servanthood, fulfill the rights of Lordship with utmost reverence and respect, together with abandoning and divesting oneself of all claims to be doing so or to see oneself as doing it, and this is the result of either their absorption in the perception of the Real moving them to do it or their intake in the understanding of their shortcomings and the attributes of their souls which leaves no room for their giving themselves any consideration or importance. This explanation is the sum of what they have said about courtesy and good manners, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on them.

Question (95)

The mentioned Sayyid also asked Imam al-Haddad, “What should one intend when one sends greeting and salutes the virtuous [*salihin*] in one’s ritual prayer, and who are the virtuous [*salihin*] meant by this greetings and salute?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “You should know that virtue [*salah*] is a high degree and Allah the Exalted attributes it in the Quran to a number of His Prophets. Among them Allah describes Abraham (Ibrahim), Jesus (Isa) and John (Yahya), may peace be upon them, with the term ‘virtuous’ [*solihun*]. Reflect on the verses in the Quran mentioning this, and it should suffice you.

Then it is incumbent when a man send salutation to the virtuous [*salihun*] in this context one should intend those whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, intended when he taught his community the testimony of faith and greetings [*Tashahhud & Attahiyat*].

Question {96}

The mentioned Sayyid also asked Imam al-Haddad, “Whether if he were to recite Surah 32 *al-Sajda* and Surah 67 *Mulk (Tabarak)* in the supererogatory [*sunna*] prayer after Isha would not need to recite them before going to bed?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “Yes it would suffice, as has been handed down.”

Question {97}

The mentioned Sayyid also asked Imam al-Haddad, “Whether to recite the invocations before sleep whenever one wished to sleep and was making ready for it?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “All the invocations attached to sleep whether *tasbih* or otherwise can be performed when one wishes to sleep and begins to make ready for it. Some should be done only lying down, according to what is in the hadiths concerning this matter.

Question {98}

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad, “Whether the ‘Seven’ invocations [*musabbaat*] could be requited later if missed?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered,

“Yes, the *musabbaat*¹ should be completed after sunrise and sunset as other time-bound invocations are.”

Question (99)

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about attending gatherings [*majalis*] where there are poetic recitations [*sama*] are accompany with musical instruments like tambourines [*dufuf*] and lutes [*ud*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “Attending gatherings where they use tambourines, and lutes with invocations or poetic recitation are dangerous unless in the presence of the perfect among gnostic [*Arifin*] men and with their permission. Therefore, try to avoid that whenever possible. Talking about audition may involve much lengthy elaboration.

Our master, Imam al-Ghazali, thoroughly did this discourse, may Allah’s mercy be upon him in the “*Ihya*” where he devoted a whole section to it.

١. **الْمُسَبَّعَاتُ الْعُشْرُ الْمَشْهُرَةُ وَهِيَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.** وَهُوَ أَنْ تَقْرَأُ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ
الشَّمْسِ وَبِسْطَهَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَقَبْلَ الْغَرْوَبِ:

١. **الْفَاتِحَةُ** (سبعاً)، ٢. **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ** (سبعاً)، ٣. **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ** (سبعاً)،
٤. **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ** (سبعاً)، ٥. **قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ** (سبعاً)، ٦. **آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ** (سبعاً)،
٧. **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ،** وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ (سبعاً).
٨. **اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَاحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ** (سبعاً).
٩. **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ**
إِنَّكَ قَرِيبٌ مُّحِيطٌ الدَّعَوَاتِ (سبعاً). ١٠. **اللَّهُمَّ افْعُلْ بِي وَبِهِمْ عَاجِلًا وَعَاجِلًا فِي الدِّينِ وَالدُّنْيَا**
وَالآخِرَةِ مَا أَنْتَ لَهُ أَهْلٌ وَلَا تَفْعَلْ بِنَا يَا مُولَانَا مَا نَحْنُ لَهُ أَهْلٌ **إِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ رَّؤْفٌ رَّحِيمٌ** (سبعاً).

Question {100}

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about those who feel more inclination for the knowledge of the outward [*zahir*] than for those of the inward [*batin*].

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him and be pleased with him, answered, “To be more inclined to knowledge and sciences of the outward [*zahir*] than those of the inward [*batin*] is of the enticements of the ego [*nasf*] and insinuating whisper [*waswas*] of the Enemy (devil). An argument put forward that the need of the people as the reason for outward sciences is an error because the people need inward knowledge even more.

For one’s inward to be lacking in inward [*batin*] knowledge detracts from one’s faith [*iman*] while lack of outward knowledge detracts from one’s acts of worship [*Islam*]. Yet, they are inseparable, but the first is superior and noble.

So seek both knowledges, keen to acquire them, and strive to learn both. Be more concerned and careful to acquire the more essential and profitable knowledge.

Speaking of such matters needs much elaboration and were I to devote a separate work to each, they would be worthy of it. Those who possess the knowledge of Allah and His religion are keeping silent because people have turned away from Allah and from taking His path, they lack the desire for knowledge and have no patience for seeking the truth and its people, they neither follow them nor when they find them, do they take of what they possess, and this has now become the rule and the dominant attribute of the people of this time, save those whom Allah guards and a very few these are.

Question {101}

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about addressing correspondence in the format from ‘so and so’ to ‘so and so’?

Imam al-Haddad answered, “This is just as you begin your last letter with from ‘so and so’ to ‘so and so’ and it is the *Sunna* and appropriate courtesy, which was the way of the predecessors and their virtuous successors, so keep to it.”

Question {102}

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about reciting some of his routine [awrad] as he walks along.

Imam al-Haddad answered, “There is no harm in that and no reproach if done with the heart as present and collected as when sitting down. Thus, state the superior scholars as concerns the recitation of Quran and remembrance [azkar].”

Question {103}

The mentioned Sayyid also asked Imam al-Haddad about the regular recitation of the blessed and esteemed supplications [hizb] of Sheikh Abu al Hasan al-Shadhili, may Allah’s mercy be on him.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him, answered, “Recite regularly ‘*Hizb al Barr*’ with the morning award and ‘*Hizb Al Bahr*’ after Asar.

As for Sheikh Hussain Bilfaqih’s opinion concerning these, it is clear. However, it is incumbent that one should give priority at that time to what was received from the Messenger of Allah.

For example, when you to recite *Hizb al-Bahr* after Asar prayer, first you should recite the glorification [tasbih], praises to Allah [tahmid] and Allah is Great [takbir]. When the time prescribed is the same, recite the Prophetic invocations first, and the rest is clear.

For your additions to our compilations of morning and evening invocations are acceptable, recite them afterwards.

Read the books of those known learned as much as you can, whether you understand or not, for in them are blessings [*baraka*] and goodness. These two litanies should suffice you from the litanies of the Shadhilis. To learn the Prophetic invocations and supplications is better and nearer to perfection.

For the unclear passages in those litanies, it is incumbent that one should neither preoccupy oneself with nor object to; one should reflect on whatever is clear and understand it. A thing is clear when it has an obvious meaning and a known context. What is unclear or problematic is what is difficult to understand.

You said that you had added blessings and peace on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and the word "Messenger" after "Prophet", in the formula beginning with "I am content with . ." [*raditu. .*] is no harm in this. A version has been transmitted with the term "Messenger"; however, the other one is sounder, using both is to be encouraged.



A Question from the esteemed the virtuous Sayyid Abdullah bin Agil bin Sheikh

Question {104}

The esteemed Sayyid Abdullah bin Agil bin Sheikh asked Imam al-Haddad, “What is the meaning of some verses of poetry [qasidah], and the first of which was,

مِنْ كُلِّ مَعَنِّي لَطِيفٍ اسْتَقِي فَدَحًا
وَكُلِّ نَاطِقَةٍ فِي الْطُّوْنِ تُطْرِبُنِي

“From every subtle meaning, I drink a cup
And each speaking creature in the universe charms me.”

The second,

يَا قُرْةَ الْعَيْنِ سَلْ عَيْنِي هَلْ أَكْتَحَلْتُ
بِمَنَظِيرٍ حَسَنٍ مُذْ غِبْتَ يَا أَمْلِي

“O joy of the eye, ask my eye if it has used the kohl,
of a beautiful sight since you hid, O my hope!”

And the third,

إِذَا مَا رَأَيْتَ اللَّهَ فِي الْكُلِّ فَاعِلًا
رَأَيْتَ جَمِيعَ الْكَائِنَاتِ مِلَاحًا

وَإِنْ مَا تَرَى إِلَّا مَظَاهِرَ صُنْعَهِ
حِجْبَتَ فَصَرِيرَتِ الْحِسَانِ قِبَحًا

“When you see that Allah is in everything the Actor,
You see that everything that exists is lovely,
But when you see only the appearances of His making,
You are veiled and have rendered the lovely ugly.”

What is the meaning and definition of this vision and what is its reality, since Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, is beyond colour, form or personality?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him and be please with him, answered, “The meaning of the verses that you inquire about and that of similar verses is clear and presents no problems, for the vision is that of the heart, either through the eyes of learning and taking heed or through the eye of experiential contemplation.

Then it may be a glimpse of the insight into the person's inner vision, and these need no form, colour, personality, face to face meeting or any other perceivable corporeal attribute.

The example is how believers shall see their Lord in the Garden, although this vision will be through the outer eyesight. However, there the external sight will be like the inner eyesight and secrets of this world.

As for the first verse of the *Qasidah*, it indicates that the world has become for him an intermediary governed in every way by Divine Knowledge. In reality, this event does happen and is a healthy spiritual state [*hal*] for those in this state.

As for the second verse, it indicates that he sees none other than Him and whenever he looks at any other he sees in a real vision only the One who gave it its appearance and manifested it. In this, there is a certain exaggeration which is acceptable from those who in love and yearning.

As for the last two verses, if you see that Allah exist in everything that happens, the One who caused the events, and this is to know the attribute of the Maker in the made object, to see in every act the effect of the Actor, His Wisdom, His wondrous precision, the reason and purpose of His creating them, that which He wants to do with and for them. All these are good and beautiful and contain no ugliness and no imperfection.

Those whose ill-fortune and bad choice it is to reverse this vision may see ugliness in all or some things, and this does not include the legally approved or disapproved things, there are for these other meanings which come from a different route which is the Divine Command.

As for attributing transcendence, holiness and exaltation beyond any creature's attribute, to the Real, it is agreed upon from both the perspective of the Law and that of realization. It is such in both this world and the Hereafter, but the people of the path tend to overstep some limits and exaggerate

Some may speak immoderately when overpowered by a spiritual state [*hal*], they are all excusable, and there are justifications for what they say that are known by those who are qualified. Nothing is vaster than divinely related things, nothing more evident to those who are qualified, and nothing more dangerous to the unqualified, especially if delved into without an authoritative sheikh to guide them along these routes and accompany them through these dominions.

وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

“Allah guides whom He will to a straight path.”¹

فَسَلَامٌ

¹ Surah 24 An Noor Verse 46.

**Collection of Questions from the esteemed,
who collated religious rulings [fatwa] Sayyid
Ahmad bin Zain Alhabshie Ba-Alawi**

Question {105}

The esteemed Sayyid Ahmad bin Zain Alhabshie Ba-Alawi, asked Imam al-Haddad, “How one should interpret the verses and hadiths indicating that the torment of the disbelievers, may Allah protect us from it, is permanent endless knowing that Imam Ahmad has transmitted on the authority of ibn Umar that,

لِيَأْتِينَ عَلَى جَهَنَّمْ يَوْمَ تَصْفَقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُهَا لَيْسَ فِيهَا أَحَدٌ وَذَلِكَ بَعْدَمَا يَلْبُسُونَ فِيهَا
أَحْقَابًا.

“There shall come a day when the gates of Hell [*Jahannam*] will be clapping, and there will remain no one in it and that following their spending long periods in it.”

Many others have transmitted similar narration from ibn Masud, and Abu Huraira and ibn Taimiyah related it on the authority of other Companions.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and grant us benefit from him, answered, “You ask about something which too much has already been said. Some scholars among the people of *Sunna* have objected to certain people belonging to the Path of Allah [*tariqa*] who have accepted the hadith that you have quoted and said that the torments of the people of the Fire, the idolaters and disbelievers, will come to an end. They have no compelling proof in this hadith, even supposing it to be authentic, for the numerous texts from the Book and *Sunna* that have reached the level of Uninterrupted Continuity [*tawatur*] and are not open to interpretation cannot be countered with such illusions.

A particular scholar, having quoted both points of view, then proposed an explanation combining them. He said, “The Fire has seven tiers the highest of which is called *Jahannam*, this is the place

of the sinners among the believers, and there is no doubt that their faith will bring them out of it, each in his own time, and, once they all depart, it will be left vacant.” That is reasonable enough, but I still do not accept it because it does not solve the problem. There is no alternative here but to accept the textual evidence of the Book and *Sunna* and that which both our early predecessors [*salaf salleh*] and their successors in this community have agreed.

You should know that whoever reads widely in different sciences or knowledge will come across many similar matters which may arouse some illusions and problems in his mind and an enlightened intellect. A sound mind will rescue him from these. The one who accepts a comprehensive statement of beliefs that has the approval of the majority of the people of *sunna* will have protected his belief.

We have come across many such things in books, and Allah has protected us from being deluded by them or pursuing whatever was ambiguous. We are aware in that matter which you have raised and other similar ones of many long discourses by many Sufis.

I think Sheikh ibn Hajar has alluded to that question somewhere in his book ‘*al-Zawajir*’, but it is long since I have last read this book. Nothing is problematic for “Whoever has a heart or listens with attentiveness”.

Question {106}

The mentioned Sayyid Ahmad bin Zain, asked Imam al-Haddad, whether a man affiliated to a sheikh of the Path can increase in rank [*maqam*] through his sheikh without being aware of it? If that is so, then what is the reason? Is it his love for his sheikh and his Path, or his attraction to his pattern of behaviour and his perceiving him as perfect, and if this is so, can it be strengthened and increased?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “Yes, he is improved by the sheikh’s concerned gaze and his reverence and good opinion of him, and he becomes aware of

certain parts of that increase but not of others. He increases and benefits more from this than from his strivings and deeds. However, when both parts present in the disciple [*murid*], he becomes more worthy of increase and more likely to benefit.

As for that which strengthens the factors that you have just mentioned, it is for the disciple [*murid*] to dwell on the virtuous deeds and pleasing behaviour that reinforce his belief in the sheikh and reverence for him.

On the whole, there is nothing more profitable to the disciple [*murid*] than to lose himself in the sheikh and think well and believe in him to perfection. With these, a little concentration and striving are worth much and vice versa.

To explain this question in detail would be lengthy. We have mentioned some the answer in the ‘Book of the Disciple’¹. So you can reflect on it, and it will suffice you.

إِنْشَاءَ اللَّهِ

Allah willing,



¹ The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker.

رسالة آداب سلوك المريد.

A Question from the Eminent Sayyid Abdullah bin Muhammad Musawa

Question {107}

Sayyid Abdullah bin Muhammad Musawa asked Imam al-Haddad, about the teaching children and others, as well as many other issues?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him from his reply, answered, “Teaching children as well as others is required and encouraged by Law [*sharia*] on condition that one possesses the knowledge and has sincerity with Allah the Exalted. Knowledge [*ilm*] here means to teach what you know and keep silent about what you do not know, for Allah does not like those who pretend and the sin of the one who speaks not what he knows.

As for reading the books of Ghazali, you say that you have read some and that our book ‘*an-Nasaih*¹’, should be sufficient. You should know that that is partly so, but in the writings of Ghazali, there is light, blessings, benefits and secrets. They have an effect which no other book has. So read them, together with ‘*an-Nasaih*’ as much as you can, either the ‘*Ihya*²’, ‘*al-Arbain al usul*³’ or *Minhaj al Abidin*⁴’. May Allah take over your guidance, hold of our heart and yours, lead them to what Allah loves and is pleased with, for a good ending Ameen!

As for marriage, there is no harm in it. There are in marriage gains and profits as well as responsibilities and hindrances. So, weigh each against the other and be where the balance weighs header.

As regards choosing a spouse from the *sharifs* or other, you should know that concordance in kind is better, purer and more suitable. Whatever Allah has decreed and ordained, that is good provided there is nothing frivolous in it, either in the eyes of the law [*sharia*] or common custom.

¹ Religious Advice and Recommendations of the Faith. النصائح الدينية والوصايا الإيمانية.

² Revival of Religious Science [*Ihya Ulum al Din*]. إحياء علوم الدين

³ The Forty Fundamentals of Religion [*al Arbain fi usul al Din*]. الأربعين في أصول الدين.

⁴ Methodology for the Worshippers [*Minhaj al Abidin*]. منهاج العبادين.

**Collection of Questions from the
Eminent Sufi Scholar Sheikh Abdullah
bin Said bin Uthman al-Amudi**

Question {108}

The Eminent Sufi Scholar Sheikh Abdullah bin Said bin Othman al-Amudi, asked Imam al-Haddad, “What is his opinion concerning those who were never reached by the call to Islam nevertheless behaved in certain matters according to the religious law [*sharia*], as though having been guided to them by Allah; would they be rewarded with the Garden and become like its people?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and grant us benefit from him, answered, “Regarding your question, know first of all that scholars of authority in these matters have disagreed on those who lived in the periods between every two consecutive Prophets as well as those who live in a remote area of the vast earth and were thus never reached by the call to Islam.

Some held the view that they would be punished since they were not believers in the oneness of Allah and Allah does not forgive those who associate others with Him.

Others held the opinion that they would not be punished since the call never reached them and there is, therefore, no case against them; and Allah the Exalted says, *وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا*. “We would not send Our Wrath until We sent a Messenger.”¹

And yet others still said that one should refrain from formulating an opinion, which is the safer and wiser course since the evidence for each view, whether textual or rational, seems to all outward appearances to be somewhat contradictory. However, the reality of the matter is that no contradiction at all exists.

As for someone who, as you mention, was not reached by the Messenger but, as a gift from Allah to him and guidance that Allah the

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 15.

Exalted favoured him with, believed and performed the kinds of devotions that were made lawful through the Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, and this is not impossible. However, we have never heard of it happening. If then we assume that it is possible, his state would be far better than those who were never reached by the Messenger but neither believed nor acted according to the Law [*Sharia*]. It has been said that he would be treated mercifully and spared all torment.

The Imam, the Proof of Islam, in his book 'The Difference Between Disbelief and Heresy' is among those who share this opinion. Allah knows best the reality of things, their consequences, where they will come to rest, and of all things, Allah knows all possible detail from all possible angles.

The one who studies these things, if he is one who fears Allah and guards himself against His wrath, can never speak definitively or conclusively except with regards to what is explicitly stated in Law [*sharia*] and specifically mentioned unequivocally and in the absence of any other statement which may contradict it.

In such matters, this is almost impossible. So do reflect on what we have said, it is comprehensive and contains more than the question involved.

وَاللهُ الْهَادِيُ إِلَى الصَّوَابِ

Allah, it is who guides to the truth.

Question {109}

The Sufi Sheikh Abdullah bin Said bin al-Amudi, asked Imam al-Haddad, about the definition of sincerity or honesty [*sidq*], the person in the state of sincere [*sadiq*], the position of total truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*] and the person in this station [*siddiq*], as well about other issues which came to light by the Imam's answers.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and us and benefit us from his lives, answered, "As for your question about the

definition of sincerity [*sidq*] and the person in the state of sincere [*sadiq*], you should know that sincerity [*sidq*] is a noble state [*hal*] and the term is used to indicate that both one's inward and outward are united in the effort to achieve the desired goal appropriately and most thoroughly. The person in the state of sincere [*sadiq*] is he who has established in this state [*hal*], and there is of necessity differences in degree between such people, some being more thorough than others. The maximum of the state of sincere [*sadiq*] is to reach the beginning of the degrees [*maqam*] of total truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*].

Question {110}

As for your inquiry about the definition of the status [*maqam*] total truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*] and the person in this station [*maqam*] of sincere [*siddiq*]: The such a person [*siddiq*] who has acquired all the degree of sincerity [*sidq*] and states of the sincere person [*sadiq*] most fully and firmly free from doubts or changes.

The person in this station of sincere [*siddiq*] is the one in whom this description is established and who is firmly stationed in this degree [*maqam*]. He is the believer who is perfect in faith, certitude, concentration on drawing near to Allah the Exalted, acting for the sake of Allah, summoning others to Allah by his words in both his state [*hal*] and status [*maqam*].

The people of this degree differ; some are more perfect than others; the upper limit of sincere truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*] is Prophethood [*nubuwwa*].

Is there another degree between Prophethood [*nubuwwa*] and the Sincere Truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*]?

There are differences of opinion on this. The Sheikh Muhyiddin bin Arabi, the one with divine knowledge [*al-arif*] the author of the '*Futuhat*' mentioned that between them was another degree termed the Station of Nearness [*Qurba*], and he wrote on this subject in a pleasant work which we came across; it was read to us in

Taiz of Yemen by a man of knowledge and Sufi called Yusuf al-Jawi (a Javanese) who is one of our companions.

We believe that there is no separate degree or station [*maqam*] between Prophethood and sincere truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*] and that this Nearness [*Qurba*] that ibn ‘Arabi, may Allah’s mercy be upon him, spoke about is the highest station within sincere truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*]. It is a unique attribute of some of the people in this noble degree [*maqam*] just like that of Friendship (Ibrahim or Abraham) [*Khalil*], Conversation (Musa or Moses) [*Kalam*], Spiritual (Isa or Jesus) [*Ruhiyya*] and other similar matters are attributed in the stations of Prophethood and Messengers, unique to some of the people of this sublime and noble degree. And Allah gave all these degrees [*maqam*] to our Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, thus giving him supremacy over all other Prophets and Messengers.

Sheikh ibn Arabi said in this [*maqam*] of Nearness [*Qurba*] is al-Khidr¹, for he is above the Sincere Truthfulness [*siddiqiyya*] but below the Prophets, as are those whose states [*hal*] are similar to his such as ZulQarnain² and Maryam, may peace be upon them.

In this matter, we believe what we have mentioned is the truth, and this will be evident for those who think about it in the writings of the Proof of Islam and other authorities. al-Ghazali said it in his book ‘The Forty Fundamentals of Religion’ [*al Arbain fi usul al Din*] and other work. Also, the Sheikh ibn ‘Arabi made a reference to what the Proof of Islam had written, then said, “This degree [*maqam*], meaning that of nearness [*qurba*], may remain hidden from even some of the greatest authorities such as Imam al-Ghazali, for he never mentioned a degree between Sincere Truthfulness [*Siddiqiyya*] and Prophethood [*nubuwwa*].” The above is what we observe.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.

¹ Allah the Exalted mentioned Al-Khidr in Surah 18 al Kahf Verse 65.

² Allah the Exalted mentioned ZulQarnain also in Surah 18 al Kahf Verse 86.

Question {111}

As regards to your question about Mastery or Empowerment [*Tamkin*] and whether it applies to all stations [*maqam*]?

Yes, it does apply to each one of them. A servant may have mastery in some but not all stations. For example, he may have mastery in the stations of sincerity [*ikhlas*] and renunciation [*zuhd*] but not in those of reliance [*tawakkul*] and love [*mahabba*]. The one who is given the mastery of all stations is genuinely masterful.

Mastery is complete stability and firm establishment in a station [*maqam*] so that the possessor of that station [*maqam*] never wavers and never changes, he is not overcome by spiritual states [*hal*], nor is he swayed by them, and this may be specific to one state [*hal*] or general, including them all, as we mentioned before.

Question {112}

As for your inquiry about the lowest and highest degrees of certitude [*yakin*] of the person in the status [*maqam*] of sincerity [*sadiq*] and the lowest and highest degrees [*maqam*] of certitude [*yakin*] of the sincere [*ikhlas*] person in this status [*siddiq*].

This question that cannot very well be asked since both the *sadiq* and the *siddiq* are people of complete certitude [*yakin*]. The most one can say is that the certitude [*yakin*] of the *siddiq* is more comprehensive than that of the *sadiq* and that the *sadiqun* differ in their degree of certitude according to the differences between their degrees of sincerity [*sidq*], those well-established in this status [*maqam*] of *siddiqun*. One may ask about the lowest and highest degrees of certitude only where the generality of believers is concerned.

We wrote about the above at the beginning of the “Book of Assistance” so look it up there. It is to the certitude [*yakin*] of the *siddiqun* that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was referring when he said, “Were the veil

[*kasf*] to be removed I would not increase in certitude [*yakin*.]” The cover is inevitable in this abode, it is a veil which may become so thin and subtle that some people of direct vision may think that neither cover nor veil remains, but the truth is that a veil is inescapable as long as a human being is in this abode. Even if it be reduced to only the physical body and human form of the man of vision, it is still a veil.

Question {113}

As for your question about whether in the stations [*maqam*] of sincerity [*siddiqiyya*], all or some of them, there is a pleasure for the soul [*nasf*] in all or some of its stations?

Yes, there is pleasure and delight in it. Still, it is not termed a passion [*nafsu*] since when the soul has the noble attribute and the high rank that *siddiqiyya* is, it can be but a serene soul¹, in whom all human passions and all physical appetites have been extinguished. Felicity of the soul lies in this spiritual rank [*maqam*], comes from and is caused by it. This felicity resembles that of the people in the Garden in that it neither distracts nor veils them from Allah, provided they are of those whose attribute is extinction [*fana*] and subsistence [*baqa*].

Think about the fullness of these meanings in the words of ibn Ata’illah toward the end of the ‘Hikam’² where he says, “..should they descend to the heaven of obligations, or the earth allotted shares,” etc.

Question {114}

As for your question about whether the Individual [*Ifrad*] are outside the circle of the Pole Axis [*Qutb*], the Supreme Savior [*Ghawth*] as some have said?

Then you should know that we were asked about this subject a long time ago and answered it as sufficed for the time and place. We

¹ يا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ. “O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!”

² The Hikam, the Book of Wisdom of Ahmed ibn Ata Allah Al-Iskandari, a master of the tariqa *Shadhiliyya*.

now say, “Allah has in His creation hidden secrets, particularities and ways of disposing of things which only Allah knows fully. Those who are given some of the secrets, shown hidden subject matter or given the power of action over part of His Kingdom, live according to what He gave them. They may think in a limited manner and reckon that beyond that nothing else exists, or be open and know that what they have is but a little out of plenty, a small portion of something immense, and that,

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ.

“Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He will.”¹

وَمَا أُوتِيْشُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا.

“of knowledge, it is only a little that is communicated to men.”²

The leader of the Saints of the Circle [*Qutb al-Ghawth*], they are the leaders [*Imam*] saviour who disposes of the people affairs. They are the ones whose numbers were given in those hadiths and reports that relate to them. If Allah should reveal to His servants that He has saints who appear to be other than those numbered ones, they may still belong to them, but he may have been shown some of their subtle secret realities that are unrelated to the Circles or to the function of disposing. He may then mistake them for men when they are, in reality, subtle realities of some of the men of the Circles.

If his vision of them is sound and they are in effect men, then we will accept it from him if he is one whose status makes him worthy of it, for the decree of Allah are formidable, His Kingdom vast, and His secrets innumerable, as we have said before. But we do not accept it from everyone who is of that nature, that is, a man of vision, unless we know that he has the station which encompasses all stations and that he is the Perfect Man [*al-Insan al-Kamil*] or someone close to this station such as the two leaders [*Imams*], the four ‘Supporters’ [*Awtad*] or the seven ‘Substitutes’ [*Abdal*].

¹ Surah 2 al-Baqara Verse 255.

² Surah 17 al-Israa Verse 85.

As for people of the path who may have some direct perception and mastery, they may see things and utter words which the people of outward authority will consider false and excessive when they are, for them, true. They are excusable on account of their being overcome by their states [*hal*] and the Divine conditions which are unbearable and with which they can but say what they say.

These may be the words that were reported to have been said by the Sufi Sheikh Ahmad bin AbdulQadir if indeed he is the one to have uttered them and none has mentioned them before, and if he has related them about someone else then the person who said them is of such kind, may Allah have mercy on them,

وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ.

“Allah says the truth, and it is He who guides along the right way.”¹

You mentioned in a recent letter what you understood from a letter of ours where we mentioned that the men of Allah might generally be divided into three categories. That opposite each category there is one kind of deceitful people who parody the truthful but are far removed from truth and its people.

Both what you and your friend have understood is acceptable. However, the liar who is the counterpart of the truthful is in reality in a state [*hal*] which is the opposite of his. The two may be confused, as far as appearances are concerned, only by those who have no firm knowledge and no insight,

لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَعْوِلاً

“that that which Allah has decreed may come to pass.”²

As for what you said about extinction [*fana*] and subsistence [*baqa*]?

You should know that only to experience these and realize them in oneself and not merely be informed about them is of any consequence. One can learn about the states [*hal*] of extinction [*fana*] and subsistence [*baqa*] while being neither a man of extinction [*fana*]

¹ Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 4.

² Surah 8 al Anfal Verse 42.

nor one of subsistence [*baqa*] and can thus claim for himself something that is not his because he is unable to distinguish between those matters which he can learn and those which he should experience.

As for your question: “Is extinction [*fana*] one of extinction of existence [*fana wujud*] or extinction of witnessing [*fana shuhud*], and similarly for subsistence [*baqa*]?”

You should know that the matter is complex. In some situation, it is the extinction of existence and in others an extinction of witnessing only, while existence remains as it is.

In most cases, extinction involves both the existence and the witnessing of attributes but not of the bodies. The same applies to subsistence. The extinct man may be extinct to existence while existence remains as it is; he is only extinct to his actions and perception of it. Many details need to be mentioned here and need lengthy elaboration, so think deeply about what we have said, reflect well on it and the meaning will appear to you, even if gradually.

Question {115}

You mentioned in your previous letter that you were writing a book and intended to mention in one of its chapters those sheikh whom you have received from. When you came to visit and showed it to us, you had proceeded to the point where you mentioned us.

If you intend to mention in that chapter of the work those whom you have received from, then, Allah willing, it is appropriate.

If you intend that we suggest to you some of those from whom we have received and some of our chains of transmission as far as the master investiture cloth [*khirqa*]¹ and other such matters are concerned. Then you should know that we have met and taken from numerous people, both of the BaAlawi Sayyid and others whom we

¹ The Khirqa is a cloth of shoal [*radi*] or skull cap or head dress [*imamah*] of the sheikh master as an investiture gift presented to the disciple [*murid*].

have known in Tarim, parts of Hadramaut, or have met in our journeys to the two honourable Sanctuaries [*haramain*] for Hajj and to Yemen.

These are so numerous that to enumerate them would be too lengthy, were we to do so they would perhaps number more than one hundred scholars [*alim*], people who know [*arif*] and virtuous brothers.

We were once asked to enumerate them and relate some of their merits but were prevented from doing so by some of the time's events, the lack of interest of its people for such matters and other hindrances. Not every obstacle can be mentioned, as Imam Malik ibn Anas, may Allah have mercy on him, has said, "We shall, however, mention a few of them in a summary way."

You should know that we have taken outward knowledge from a number of its people and studied it thoroughly inappropriate times. Then we took the sciences of the Path from a number of its people, some well-known and others whose state were hidden. They were, in that time, the last to follow and received knowledge from the predecessor, and well established in their state [*hal*] and station [*maqam*] and they have departed to Allah the Exalted and Last Abode.

One of the most respectable of the people of the Path [*tariqa*] was the Sufi Sayyid the *Malaamati*¹ Aqil bin AbdurRahman bin Muhammad bin Aqil al-Saqqaf BaAlawi. We visited him frequently, took from him, and were invested with the *khirqa* by him. He told me during the investiture that he had never invested anyone else.

We also met the exemplary *Sayyid*, the comprehensive scholar AbuBakr, son of the exemplary *Sayyid* AbdurRahman bin Shihab, the Sufi *Sayyid* AbdurRahman bin Sheikh Mawla‘Aidid BaAlawi and his son the *Sayyid* 'intoxicated in Allah' [*majdub*] knowledge in Allah [*arif*] Sheikh bin AbdurRahman, and the *Sayyid al-majdub al-Arif* Umar bin Ahmad al-Hadi bin Shihab BaAlawi, the *Majdub Malamati Sayyid*, Sahl ibn Muhammad Ba-Hasan alHadili BaAlawi, the superior

¹ *Malaamati* is a saint at a high spiritual station whose outward behaviour is like a common man.

authoritative *Arif* Sayyid Sheikh Umar bin AbdurRahman al-Attas who lived in Huraida and whom we met many times and from whom we took the complete manner of remembrance [*dhikr*], chain of transmission [*musafaha*], and investiture with the master's cloth [*khirqa*].

We also took from the illustrious *Sayyid* and celebrated with knowledge of Allah [*arif*] Sheikh Muhammad bin Alawi BaAlawi who lived in Mecca the Honorable through written letters, but we never met him personally. He also invested us by correspondence, may Allah have mercy on them, make us benefit from them and give us and all Muslims of their blessings and secrets.

As for the chains of transmission [*sanad*], we shall mention something of them. We shall start with the chain of transmission [*sanad*] of Sayyid Muhammad bin Alawi. Then we say, "We took the investiture of the *khirqa* from Sayyid Muhammad bin Alawi, and he gave us authorization [*ijaza*] for it. And from the one who knows Allah [*arif*] Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali of al-What, a town in Hadhramaut, who took from the two respectable authoritative sheikhs Sayyid Sheikh bin Abdullah al-Aydarus the author of 'al-*Iqd al-Nabawi'* and *Sayyid* Umar bin Abdullah al-Aydarus who is buried in Aden.

As for *Sayyid* Sheikh was invested by his father, *Sayyid* Sheikh Abdullah bin Sheikh.

While *Sayyid* Abdullah who took from his uncle the illustrious Pole [*Qutb*] Sheikh AbuBakr, the son of the master Sheikh Abdullah bin AbuBakr al-Aydarus.

Sayyid Umar took from his father, *Sayyid* Abdullah, who took from his father *Sayyid* Alawi, son of the Sheikh Abdullah alAydarus.

Sayyid Alawi took from his brother the Pole, the Sheikh, the *Sayyid* AbuBakr bin Abdullah of Aden. Thus, the chain of transmission [*sanad*] of *Sayyid* Sheikh and *Sayyid* Umar were joined in Sheikh AbuBakr, according to what you see in this context to Sheikh Abi Bakr.

As for the one who knows Allah [Arif] sheikh Sayyid Umar bin AbdurRahman al-Attas, he took from the Sheikh Sayyid al-Husain, son of the authoritative Sheikh, the Pole AbuBakr bin Salim.

Sheikh al-Husain took from his father, Sheikh AbuBakr

Sheikh Abu Bakr bin Salim took from the Sheikh Sayyid Umar ibn Muhammad Ba-Shaiban as we were informed.

Shaykh Umar Ba-Shaiban took from the Sheikh, the exemplar, Sayyid AbdurRahman, son of the comprehensive Imam Sheikh Ali bin AbuBakr.

Sheikh AbdurRahman took from his father, and the said Sheikh Ali ibn AbuBakr.

As for the Sufi sayyid Aqil bin AbdurRahman, whom we mentioned before, he took from his father, the Arif sayyid AbdurRahman bin Muhammad bin Aqil.

Sayyid AbdurRahman took from the Arif sayyid, the unique man of his time, Sheikh Ahmad bin Alawi BaJahdab,

Sayyid Ahmad bin Alawi took from the aforementioned sayyid Umar bin Muhammad Ba-Shaiban.

As for our master, Sheikh AbuBakr bin Abdullah al-Aydarus of Aden, he took from his father, the Pole of those who know Allah, Abdullah bin AbuBakr and from his paternal uncle the authoritative Sheikh Ali bin AbuBakr. Those two sheikhs took from their father al-Sakran AbuBakr son of the Sheikh, the master AbdurRahman al-Saqqaf and their paternal uncle the comprehensive sheikh Umar al-Mehdar son of Sheikh AbdurRahman.

As for Sayyid Umar bin Muhammad Ba-Shaiban, we have said before that he took from Sheikh AbdurRahman son of Sheikh Ali, Sheikh AbdurRahman took from his father Sheikh Ali and his paternal uncle Sheikh Abdullah bin AbuBakr al-Aydarus, whom we mentioned before among those we received from.

If you wish to complete those chains of transmission [*asnadi*] look into ‘al-Barqa’, the book of our master the Sheikh, the master Ali bin AbuBakr. It is a book he wrote about the investiture of the *khirqas* and those from whom he took this Path.

Look also into the ‘Lighter Chapter on Noble Adjudication’ [*al-juz al-Latiffil Tahkim al-Sharif*] written by our master the Sheikh, the Pole AbuBakr bin Abdullah al-Aydarus concerning those he took from, and their chains of transmission [*asnads*], and join that to what we have mentioned. You may write briefly if you wish or in detail, for there is room here for elaboration or details since these are numerous *khirqas*.

There are many chains of transmission going back to our master the greatest of teachers, the foremost scholar [*al-Faqih al-Muqaddam*] Muhammad bin Ali Alawi to our master the revered master, Sheikh Muhiyyidin AbdulQadir Abi Salih al-Jili and to many other sheikhs mentioned in the two works we have named, the book ‘Barqa’ of our master Sheikh Ali ibn AbuBakr and ‘*al-Juz al-Sharif*’ of our master Sheikh AbuBakr bin Abdullah al-Aydarus.

If you want those two books then look for them; you may find them where you are in Duan (in the Hadhramaut valley), otherwise write to us and we shall send them to you. May Allah the Exalted lead us to all kinds of good, reform our intentions, aims, inwards and outwards, and give us, you, our friends and all Muslims to conclude our lives in virtue and goodness.

Question {116}

The same Sheikh Abdullah al-Amudi, also asked Imam al-Haddad, “If a man of ‘taste’ and contemplation [*shuhud*] says that ‘opposite unite in a single state [*hal*] in the vision of unification,’ is it correct to say to him, “Yes, on condition that the Law [*sharia*] is given it’s due and reality [*haqiqah*] it’s due, that reason is used to judge matters that fall under its jurisdiction, while handed down knowledge (of sharia) is used for matters that necessitate it?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him, answered, “As for the question as posed and its answer, the question is pertinent, and the answer correct except for that part of the answer which says that one should use reason to judge matters which are amenable to rational thinking, for there is nothing here of any validity.

As for his saying, “by handed-down knowledge,” it is already included in his saying, “that you give the Law its due,” for the Law is what has been handed down, and reality is the consequence of knowing it and behaving according to the legal pattern that those people follow who have arrived after their travelling.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.

Question {117}

The illumined Sheikh Abdullah bin Said al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad which is better, divine knowledge [*ma'rifa*] or love [*mahabbah*]?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah benefit us from him, answered, You inquire whether divine knowledge [*ma'rifa*] is superior to love [*mahabbah*] or vice-versa. In our opinion that *ma'rifa* implies ‘more divine knowledge’ and is more incumbent, whereas love is nobler and subtler. As you have said, love is a branch of knowledge and one of its consequences. You cannot love who you do not know, but you can know who you do not love. We shall stop short of preferring one to the other for each has its merits, the merit of each being in ways different from the other.

As for *ma'rifa*, that is a consequence of love, it is indeed *ma'rifa*, but they term it contemplation [*mushahada*]. Yet contemplation is other than *ma'rifa* in that *ma'rifa* on its own indicates a certain remoteness, contrary to contemplation, which means nearness.

There is a divergence of opinion between the people of those states as to which is superior to the other, unveiling [*mukashafa*] or contemplation [*mushahada*]. The difference between these two terms is similar to that between the previous two in as much as one of them is taken to refer to the general subject and the other to a particular issue, or one to principle and the other to its branches. The unveiling is more general and contemplation more particular. Our opinion regarding those two is similar to that regarding the first two.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.

Question {118}

The Sufi Sheikh Abdullah bin Sa‘id al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad about what would happen should a friend of Allah or a saint [*wali*] do something which damages his integrity, and other questions which will be evident in the answer.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him answered: You ask whether if a saint [*wali*] commits something that damages his integrity such as a major sin, does not persist, that is, repents, fulfilling the inward and outward conditions of sound repentance, he would maintain his station [*maqam*] and state of sainthood and guardianship [*wilaya*]?

You should know that if you mean the general guardianship [*wilaya*] which belongs to the generality of believers, then that may be so; there are many proofs to support this, and these are so evident and well known that they need not be mentioned here.

But if you mean by sainthood guardianship [*wilaya*] that of the elite, the possessor of which is said to be protected against disobedience, then you should know that such a sainthood guardianship [*wilaya*] is an immense issue and that its possessor never indulges in permissible and pleasurable things, let alone falls into minor sins. The scholars stated that it is possible for such a saint [*wali*]

to do such things only to prevent the implication that saints [*awliya*] share the Prophets' infallibility which allows them no sins whatsoever in any situation.

So you should know that that which is possible is different from that which occurs, not everything possible happens. But we were we to assume that a saint [*wali*] of the elite does commit such acts, then it would diminish him greatly, and he may be dispossessed of his state [*hal*] and station [*maqam*].

The evidence is that some possessors of such stations [*maqam*] committed permissible acts which put a barrier between them and their stations and diminished degrees; this is well known by those who have studied their histories.

We have already clarified this matter in answer to a question not dissimilar to yours; this is to be found near the beginning of the collection of legal opinions about issues we were asked about, compiled by the esteemed *Sayyid Ahmad bin Zain al-Habshie*. If these are in your possession, then look into them, if not, then what we have given you in this concise answer is sufficient.

Sins and acts of disobedience, whether minor or major, are but filth, impurities and dirt from which Allah has purified His saints [*awliya*], kept away from them and raised their ranks above these occurring to them or their souls longing for them, let alone their committing them. Those sins which some said they fell into are sins in their acts of obedience and their stations [*maqam*], they only call them so because of their high degrees [*maqamat*] and sublime ranks, since the good deeds of the righteous are the misdeeds of the near.

You may have come across some of these utterances where they confess their shortcomings, their humility before their Lord, and the unworthiness of their ranks concerning their witnessing.

You should know this as it is essential and many make mistakes who have not studied these sciences and knowledge thoroughly nor established themselves firmly in the stations [*maqam*] of the people authority.

Where are the stars compared with the dust!?

Where are the rubbish heaps compared to the company of kings!?

خُذْ مَا عَرَفْتَ وَذَغْ شَيْئاً سَمِعْتَ بِهِ فِي طَلْعَةِ الشَّمْسِ مَا يُعْنِيْكَ عَنْ رُّحْلٍ

Take what you know and leave what you hear.

When the sun rises you no longer need Saturn.

وَاللَّهُ يَتَوَلَّنَا وَإِيَّا كُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَلَا يَتَهْ. وَيَلْحَظُنَا دَائِمًا بِعِنْدِ عِنَادِيْتِهِ.

May Allah takes care of us and you the best of His Guardianship

And look at us always with the eye of His concern.

Question {119}

Sheikh Abdullah bin Sa'id al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad whether the gnostic should reprove any created beings acts.

Imam al-Haddad answered, “Yes, he should rebuke whatever the pure Law [sharia] reproves, this is his duty along with other believers and Muslims, according to that which was expounded in the Law [sharia] and stated by scholars in matters of enjoining good and forbidding evil. As for seeing the Acts of Allah compared with which the acts of created beings are nothing, the gnostic can deny nothing of them, neither by state [hal] nor because of the exaltation of his rank [maqam] and perfection of his state [hal], and this applies to him in particular and to all other Muslims in general. He who neither enjoins good as defined in the Law [sharia] nor forbids evil as defined in the Law, has disobeyed and misbehaved, he has no firm position in either sharia or haqiqa.

The one in a state of extinction [fana], whose outward and inward are both absorbed in the state [hal] that has descended on him [warid], is in the same legal position as those for whom the pen holds off from recording their deeds such as the sleeper, etc. until he comes to and regains his powers of discrimination and reasoning. Beware of becoming inclined to the utterances of those who err and speak immoderately. There are on their part different matters which come near to heresy and transgressing the limits of religion.”

**Collection of Questions from the superior
scholar [faqih] Abdullah bin Muhammad
bin Uthman al-Amudi**

Question {120}

The superior scholar [faqih] Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Uthman al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad, about the quoted Sheikh al-Akhdar in the conclusion of the book written on the merit of the venerable sheikh Ma'ruf Ba-Jammal, as saying to his disciple [murid] the Sufi scholar [faqih] Umar bin Abdullah Ba-Makhrama, “I, (Sheikh al-Akhdar) have given you authorization [ijaza] for sciences (knowledge) that neither Messenger, Prophet nor near angel knows about,” etc.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him from his answer, replied, “You should know that the meaning within these words is correct and presents no problem, but its outward form is offensive and to be disapproved. Many things are such, and one needs first to know that indeed they are to be attributed to those reported to have said them.

If done so, then one needs to reflect on the problematic aspect of it when there is a necessity to do such. You are aware of what Allah, Eminent and Majestic is He, has related in His Book of the story of Moses and al-Khidr. Moses is undoubtedly firmer and superior to al-Khidr, may peace be upon them, both according to the majority who hold that al-Khidr is a saint and the other who say ‘he is a Prophet.

Nevertheless, al-Khidr knew of sciences that Moses, may peace be upon him, knew not, and this did not make him superior or preferable to Moses.

That should be enough evidence for you. Degrees and stations are different from sciences (knowledge) and knowing Allah. You are aware that a particular servant of a king of this world may be informed by the king of certain secrets that he had kept from another servant who may be higher in the king’s esteem and consideration from the one he has told, and this happens frequently, it has its necessity, conditions and secrets. Reflect again on what you have told us and what we have said, and things will become apparent to you.

A similar thing may happen with the children, friends or servants of a man. He may inform one of them of some of his secrets when others are higher in his esteem and consideration than the one he has told of this particular matter.

So make this your guideline and manner of solving this and similar problems in similar situations. The one who reads books comes across many such examples as you mention, and so sought Allah assistance.

وَاللَّهُ يَتَوَلِّ هُدًى كُمْ وَالسَّلَامُ.

May Allah guide you and peace be upon you.

Question {121}

Al-Amudi also inquired from Imam al-Haddad about issues which will become clear from the answer.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him and from his answer, replied, “You mentioned the discussion that took place between some of your companions about verses of our poem [*qasidah*] called the “*Taiyya*”, where certitude [*yaqin*] is mentioned. This matter is clear to its people of certitude and evident to them with the least amount of reflection.

The person mentioned the verse, “Make your certainty sound for it is the foundation,” This refers to the ‘Knowledge of Certainty’, the ‘Eye of Certainty’, the ‘Truth of Certainty’ and these are terms commonly employed by the people of this state. It was mentioned in the Qushayri¹ Treatise and other works.

The author also says, “that from the soundness of the ‘Knowledge of Certainty’ derives the soundness of the realities of

¹ Epistle on Sufism [*Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*] by Abdul Karim bin Huzan al-Qushayri al-Naisaburi was an Arab Muslim scholar and theologian who was born in 986 (376 AH) in Nishapur which is in Khorasan Province in Iran. Nishapur region was widely known as a center of Islamic civilization up to the 13th Century.

Islam, from the soundness of the ‘Eye of Certainty’ derives the soundness of the facts of faith [*iman*] and from the completeness of the ‘Truth of Certainty’ derives the soundness of the realities of perfection and excellence [*ihsan*].

As for the nine stations of certainty, they are mentioned in the passage between his saying, “Begin by making your repentance sound,” up to, “with the contentment that is appropriate to each state.” These are the nine stations termed the Stations of Certainty.

Sheikh Abu-Talib al-Makki¹ explained them at great length in his book ‘The Sustenance of Hearts’ [*Qut al-Qulub*] and so did Imam al-Ghazali in the volume on ‘Saving Issues’ [], where he explains other issues as well. We mention them at the end of the ‘Book of Assistance’ [*Risalatul Mu’awanah*] and tell them briefly and also at the end of ‘Sincere Religious Advices’ [*al-Nasaih adDiniyya*] together with the other consequences and fruits of certainty.

As for your second letter saying that you found difficulty in understanding some of the letter sent by the knowledgeable [al-arif] the Sheikh AbdurRahman Ba-Hurmuz to his companion, the scholar [al-faqih] gnostic [al-arif] Umar, there are no problems in it and nothing confusing.

That which you mention you thought problematic presents no problem in any way to anyone who knows the difference between summary and detailed [manner of expression] and can distinguish between conditional and absolute matters, even if not expressly brought to his attention every time they are mentioned. He should use in this what he knows of the rules of every science and knowledge and be aware that some of them are total and some partial.

In our opinion, you should know then that Allah may show a man who is not the most superior some of His secrets which He does not teach others who are better, this is correct and does occur, and this

¹ Abu Talib al-Makki, Muhammad bin Ali (996/386 H) in Baghdad, was a hadith scholar, Shafi'i jurist, and Sufi mystic.

does not annul the general statements that you quoted, for what is possible is different from what is happening.

Furthermore, that which happens in particular instances does not change the general rule.

The story of al-Khidr with Moses, may peace be upon them, is sufficient to prove it, for Moses is superior to al-khidr. Still, the latter was given by Allah knowledge of some of His secrets which Allah did not offer to Moses, and He informed him, Exalted is He, that al-Khidr had more knowledge than him (Moses), meaning as far as those secrets were concerned.

Now concerning the fact that nothing reaches the people of the Circle [*al-Qutb*] except with the knowledge of Pole [*Qutb*], this is correct, I mean as regards general secrets. And what relates to the functions they were entrusted with for the good of the world. Similarly, the saying of the Pole quoted by you, “If as much as an atom moves...” is a conditional matter, for this does not apply in an unrestricted and permanent way except to Allah, Who is One and has no partners.

So, if ever you hear, of what they say, similar things, you should know that they are conditional and particular, even if they who say them do not explicitly state so, one should know their limitations or conditions from the rules and principles that should be depended. There are many examples in the Book and Sunna, where conditional issues are stated in an unrestricted manner and vice versa.

Do not confuse this with those who are firmly established and sure of their knowledge but confuses some weak people who then stray and lose the even path.

As for your saying that the Poles [*al-Qutb*] contemplative station is that of the Presence of the Name ‘Allah’ and he is therefore called ‘Abdullah, etc., this was mentioned by the Sheikh ibn ‘Arabi with lengthy elaborations. It is correct as far as he is concerned, and we concede that to him, but this statement is limiting and too narrowly specific and some of it is problematic. The summation of this is that

looking into the realities and subtleties of the sciences and knowledge of the People of the Path should be allowed only to those who are proficient in the exoteric sciences, have first mastered them, then disciplined their souls and refined them to perfection, then were taken by a Divine pull from Allah that demolished the remainder of their human nature, a thing that cannot be reached by discipline or asceticism. Otherwise, those who continuously look into the subtleties of these sciences and knowledge, while not in the state of perfection that we have just described, will emerge from one problem only to fall into the next. They may become perplexed and unable to decide what to do, and they may be subject to other things of a more challenging nature. So look only into those parts of their sciences and knowledge that are clear.

If you find a problem in them, think about it again and measure it by the rules and principles. You will know whether it is conditional or unrestricted, general or particular, total or partial, occurring continuously or only in some circumstances.

When we mention something to you, do not object to it because of what seems problematic to you and say, “They have said this and that.” Then you should know that we are more aware and knowledgeable about what they said than you are. Take a firm hold of what we have said and reflect on it as it deserves. May Allah open for us and you the sight of the inner eye [*ainun basirah*] and guide us to what He knows is the truth in all matters, whether these are subject to differences or not,

وَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ،

“Indeed, Allah has power over all things.”¹

وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.

“And He has full knowledge of all things.”²

¹ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 39.

² Surah 57 al-Hadid Verse 3.

Question {122}

Al-Amudi, may we benefit from him, asked Imam al-Haddad about the saying of Sheikh Husain bin Abdullah Ba-Fadl, “Take a brief ritual litany [*wird*] to be used alone if necessary, a medium one to use when needed, and a long one to use when one’s state is one of breast expansion. The briefest possible form is to run it in one’s mind silently.” Also, other issues are being asked, which will become clear from the answer.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah grant us benefit from him and his answer, replied, “Praise is for Allah. You inquire about the saying of the Sufi Sheikh Husain son of the scholar, the Imam Abdullah Balhaj Ba-Fadl, may Allah’s mercy be on him, concerning routine remembrance [*awrad*] and so on. The intention and gist of it are that it is incumbent that one should always persevere in his routine litanies [*awrad*] and maintain them as much as possible and in a manner to suit each circumstance.

As for his saying that you should have a short litany [*wird*], a medium and a length, these differ with circumstances such as occupation or freedom health or sickness.

An example is what Imam al-Ghazali mentioned in his book ‘Beginning of Guidance’ [*Bidayat al Hidaya*] to be recited before sunrise, and he said that it is incumbent to have ten invocations litanies to be included in the ritual routine [*awrad*] then adds that each should be recited either one hundred, seventy or ten times at the very least. He also mentioned them in the ‘*Ihya*’ and said, “or he can recite them three times each.” This variability is due to the variability in time, energy and freedom.

This advice also applies to invocations mentioned in the *Sunna* to after each ritual prayer in the morning, evening, at bedtime, and so on. Man can make these lengthy, medium or concise if he has a comprehensive knowledge of the *Sunna*.

The least is to run them silently in one’s mind whenever occupied with pressing matters or overpowered by an illness; which is

similar to what is mentioned about the ritual prayer for those overwhelmed by illness.

The Sheikh intended nothing more than encouraging the disciple [*murid*] to take care of his routine remembrance [*awrad*] in every possible way.

Question {123}

You (Amudi) also asked about donating the reward for one's actions to the dead, whether one's parents, relatives or others.

You should know that dedicating to them the reward for charity capable of being valued in terms of money such as water, food or any other similar thing is something that has been related in sound transmissions, and so is asking forgiveness and praying for them Allah allows them to benefit from that and, by the grace of Allah, light, joy and other kinds of rewards do reach them.

As for reciting the Quran and dedicating the reward to them, scholars have differed in whether the rewards reach them, many concluding that it does and that they do benefit from it, they quote in support many tradition and true dreams.

But transmissions concerning this are all weak. If that is so with Quranic recitations, it is even more so with actions like ritual prayers and fasts.

Therefore, it is incumbent that one should give charity on behalf of the dead, ask for forgiveness, make invocation [*dua*] and ask for mercy for them. One should give some of the rewards of his charity to his parents and other such people and keep much, if not most of it to himself.

Scholars have said much about this matter. Many other issues branch off from it, but this is the gist of what has been said.

Question {124}

Al-Amudi also asked Imam al-Haddad about the words of the esteemed Friday preacher [*khatib*] ibn Nubata, “May Allah increase our reward for the affliction of prolonged distraction,” I do not think that they can be justified, for being afflicted with distraction [*alghafla*] can sometimes be sinful and, rather than being disregarded, be liable of punishment. So how can one be rewarded and paid off for it?

The words of the preacher may Allah mercy be on him, in many parts of his sermons are problematic, especially at the beginning of the sermons, and this often occurs in the utterances of scholars, for one is human and prone to be mistaken at times and correct at others. Words may be insufficient at times, especially for expressing obscure and subtle things.

The afflictions that a servant is rewarded are those that strike him in himself, wealth and relatives, whether these are sickness, poverty, death or diminution, provided he remains patient in expectation of the hereafter.

On the other hand, afflictions that strike one’s religion are mostly sins for which a man is punished and detested, for they mainly occur by the servant’s will and choice. Since the worldly affliction to befall him by his wish and choice, he would be punishable.

An example of this is if he injures himself or his child by his choice or damages his wealth, these would be punishable sins. The term affliction may be applied to both those affliction worldly and religious matters. The reward may affect worldly issues, not by the servant’s choice, and provided he patiently endures them for the sake of Allah and in expectation of Allah reward. As for Allah the Exalted saying,

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ.

“Whatever good, happens to you, is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to you, is from yourself.”¹

¹ Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 79.

You referred to this as evidence in your question. However, Allah says this concerning certain people with whose utterances He was displeased.

Commentators have said that the good intended here was like fertility of the soil or victory in battle and the evil the opposite of them, bareness and defeat. Similar is Allah words, Exalted is He,

إِن تَمْسَسْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤُهُمْ وَإِن تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا.

“If good befalls you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it.”¹

And the Exalted sayings,

إِن تُصِبْكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤُهُمْ وَإِن تُصِبْكَ مُصِيَّةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَحْذَنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ.

“If good befalls you, it grieves them; but if misfortune or affliction befalls you, they say, “Indeed, we took our precautions beforehand,” and they turn away rejoicing.”²

And there are other verses of similar meanings. As for His, August and Majestic is He, saying above,

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ.

“Whatever good, happens to you, is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to you, is from yourself.”³

Indeed the scholars have given answers for it, and one of the best is that between the two verses is an omitted sentence meaning,

فَمَا لِهُؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا.

“But what has become of these people, that they fail to understand a single fact?”⁴

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 120.

² Surah 8 at-Tawbah Verse 50.

³ Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 79.

⁴ Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 78.

And they just say,

“Whatever good befalls you is from Allah,”¹ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنْ اللَّهِ

Such statements and meaning which are unstated or implicit are yet well known to be frequent in the Quran.

This above concludes the answer. It is Allah who guides to the truth and what is right. Allah has more knowledge and wisdom. Think and ponder on this answer for it is comprehensive and most sufficient even though short and concise. The best of words is those that are brief yet informative.

Question {125}

The esteemed scholar Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Uthman al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad, “Whether one’s obedience to one’s parents’ instructions still applies when they instruct one to pursue worldly means and widen one’s use of permissible things, which may lead to some harm?

Imam al-Haddad may Allah benefit us from him, and be please with him, answered, “You ask about a person’s duty to obey his parents, and it is indeed so if either of them instructs him to widen his use of permissible [mubbah] worldly things and occupy himself with the worldly means which may result in harm to his religion or expose him to falling into sinning against his Lord!

Then we believe and declare that he is not to obey them in that, but neither is he to antagonize them, nor confront them with a direct refusal or contradiction. On the contrary, he should avoid that and treat them with the gentleness and benevolence which he is obliged to show them.

He not to obey them in disobeying Allah since there should be no obedience to a creature in disobeying ‘The Creator’, and since the issues mentioned above are the precursor and means leading to sin and

¹ They quote Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 79 and omitted the last part of Verse 78.

means falling under the same rules as their end. Those who roam around the ravine may easily fall into it.

Furthermore, the permissible things and worldly means of our times, which may be said, by those whose knowledge of the Book and *Sunna* is superficial, to be permitted, have become either forbidden [*haram*] or suspect [*syubuhat*], under the influence of the misunderstanding and confusion through which the people of this time perceive their religion. Those who possess insight into religion, are deeply steeped in the sciences and knowledge of the Book and *Sunna* and have certainty [*yaqin*] and mindful of their duties to Allah [*taqwa*], have no doubts about such issues. You should know this and reflect on it. You will, by Allah's Will, be happy and rightly guided. The whole issue is Allah's,

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِهِ

There is neither power nor ability save by Him,

وَهُوَ حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.

He is our sufficiency and the Best of Custodians.

Question {126}

The superior Sheikh, the Sufi scholar Abdullah bin Muhammad Bin Uthman al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad about the statement in the book '*Lataif al-Minan*'¹ that people who are 'wrong' can be divided into those who avenge themselves and those who do not. Then the Sheikh mentioned the fourth category, which is the highest degree and adds that in this category is like what happened to Ibrahim bin Adham.

Then he added that Sheikh Abdul Abbas had then commented that that was not the essence of perfection [*ainul kamali*], which was what the Companion Sa'id bin Zayd did, who was one of the Ten².

¹ 'Lataif al Minan' by Ibn Ata Allah is the 'Treatise on the spiritual teaching of al-Sheikh Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi and Abu al-Hasan al-Shaadhili.

² One of the Ten Companions of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, who were promised the Garden.

Al-Amudi said that it appears to me that both the act of Ibrahim bin Adham and that of the Companion were the essence of perfection, for the crime in each case was different. The woman had accused an eminent Companion of injustice, in public and the presence of the governor, perfection there was what he, may Allah be pleased with him, did to prove that he was innocent and she was lying. Whereas the culprit in Ibrahim's case attacked part of his body while ignorant of who he was. The above is the gist of the question.

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be pleased with him and his answer, replied, "You find unclear and ask about a particular story mentioned in the book '*Lataif al-Minan*' of Sheikh bin Ata illah al-Shadhili, may Allah's mercy be on him. The story is that of Ibrahim bin Adham, may Allah mercy be on him, with the man who beat him on the head and he forgave him, and what Sheikh Abul Abbas al-Mursi, may Allah's mercy be upon him, said about it. He said that the act of Sa'id ibn Zayd, one of the Ten Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, who was promised the Garden when he invoked Allah against the woman who alleged that he had misappropriated some of her lands, the story is very well known, was more perfect than that of Ibrahim when he forgave. Indeed, the matter is as you said and the justification of it as you understood it.

The summation of it is that the kind of behaviour shown by Ibrahim is better and more appropriate in general and unconditionally, and conforms to what is stated in shari'a: unconditional encouragement to forgive, except when such a contingency arises as happened with Sa'id bin Zayd. These are rare and particular instances.

A similar or almost similar thing occurred with Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, may Allah be please with him, another one of the Ten, with a man from Kufa who had said about him things which detracted from his religion and integrity, he invoked Allah against him and was answered, for he was a man whose prayers were answered. Many such events are known about the Companions and the Followers. Still, these

are only a few when compared with what is related of the forgiveness and pardon of the Prophets, imams and virtuous servants of Allah.

The determining factor is as you have understood. When the injury is to a man in himself or worldly matters, then forgiveness is the correct and better course.

Whereas if it concerns religion and the inviolable boundaries of Allah, the correct course is retribution. All of that was related about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessing and peace be upon him, and is to be found, in his sayings and actions, as anyone who has thoroughly studied the Prophet's Sunna will know.

Question {127}

The Sheikh also asked the Imam something about extinction [*fana*] that the author attributed in the same book to his Sheikh Abul-Abbas.

Imam al-Haddad answered, "You also find unclear in the same book the authors quoting his Sheikh as saying that there must remain with the wali in his extinction [*fana*] a subtle remnant of individual consciousness that justifies his being responsible before Allah. That is indeed so. However, it does not apply unconditionally to every kind or degree of extinction [*fana*], but the early stages of extinction [*fana*] before it becomes firmly established, and also its late stages if one is nearing the state of subsistence [*baqa*].

As for the extinction [*fana*] where there is overpowering and absorption, no individual consciousness remains with it, but this kind of extinction [*fana*] very rarely lasts. It is not the most superior state of extinction [*fana*], and a man should not expose himself to it, but it may occur without being either sought or intended, and those to whom it happens are excusable.

Al-Qushayri mentions in his treatise that a sheikh once entered his house, in a time of famine, and observing food there said, "This is in my house, and people are in this state of poverty!" then he fainted; he lost his reason and consciousness, the power of discrimination

returning to him only at the times when the obligatory ritual prayers were due; following which the same state [*hal*] overtook him again. Qushayri, commenting on the state of that sheikh, said that this was Divine protection and adequate absorption in Allah. The above is the meaning and gist of the story.

The summation of the matter is that extinction [*fana*] includes states which are superior but not overpowering, and others which overpower the servant and take him until he becomes extinct to himself first, then extinct to his extinction [*fana*].

These states are not unconditional superior, and much more can be said about the matter.

Qushayri in his Treatise and Suhrawardi in ‘Awarif’ have written about the state of extinction [*fana*] more elaborately, so do read them, and what we have mentioned is sufficient for those who possess, as you do, intelligence and insight to the full.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.

You also say that you long to visit and sit with us but, are prevented from doing so by the attachment of your parents and the sadness they feel when you are away from them, especially your mother. Your mother is indeed a good excuse.

Uways al-Qarni, may Allah’s mercy be on him, was delayed in meeting with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and keeping his company by his service to his mother, in loyalty and compassion for her. That added to his superiority but in a manner distinct from that which made the Companions superior to others.

There are many kinds of superiority in many contexts. The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said in hadith to a man who sought his permission to go to battle [*jihad*],

“Your jihad is in them.” فِيْهِمَا فَجَاهَدْ.

To the other who said to him, "I came to you and left them weeping." He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمَا فَأَضْرِحْ كُهْمَا كَمَا أَبْكَيْتَهُمَا.

“Return to them and make them laugh as you made them weep.”

And there is a Hadith whereby the person mentioned to the Prophet about his mother, and it was said to him,

“Stay at her feet, for there is the Garden.” **إِلَّا زَمْ رَجُلَهَا فَتَمَّ الْجَنَّةُ.**

There are in religion things which are more important than others. Some may be possible for those who are keen but physically remote, others not so. A man who acquires the knowledge, and understands it, and has taqwa and behaves well, will not be unaware of discriminating between important and meritorious but less critical matters, priorities and preferences.

وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَشْرَحُ صُدُورَنَا وَصُدُرُكُمْ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَالإِيمَانِ

May Allah the Exalted expand our breasts and yours to submit to You [*Islam*] and Faith [*Iman*]

وَيَجْعَلُنَا مِنَ الْمُتَّحَقِّقِينَ بِالْتَّقْوَىٰ وَالْإِحْسَانِ لِنَفْرُزُ مِنْهُ بِمَعِينَتِهِ وَمَحَبَّتِهِ.

And make us of those who affirmed in our duties to You [taqwa] and Excellence Actions [Ihsan], that we may win Allah's company and love.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقُوا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ.

“For Allah is with those who have taqwa and those who behave with excellence.”¹

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا أَنْقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ أَنْقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.

“On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness there is no blame for what they ate in the past when they guard themselves against evil and believe, and do deeds of righteousness, then guard themselves

¹ Surah 16 an-Nahl Verse 126.

against evil and believe, and then again, guard themselves against evil and do good. For Allah love those who do good.”¹

Question {128}

The superior scholar Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Uthman al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad about a statement which he found obscure, “The gnosis [*maarifa*] of a perfect man is incomplete until he knows what is his, what is front him, in him, and incumbent on him, and fulfills all these; and that he knows what was before creation and what was not, and what was to be before his creation and after it, that which never was and how it would have been had it been, and when would all that be.”

The Questioner, al-Amudi said, “He then concluded that knowledge is a condition for the perfection of gnosis [*arif*]!”

And that, “What I feel is that the gnosis [*arif*] that gives its possessor the title of gnosis [*arif*] is the knowledge of what is necessarily Allah’s, Transcendent and Exalted is He, what is for Him impossible and what is possible, not by way of proofs and logical arguments but through unveiling [*kashf*] and contemplation [*mushahada*].

As for his saying, “...until he knows what is his,’ etc., concerns the knowledge of something of the Unseen and is not a condition for gnosis [*arif*].

As for his saying, “and knows what was. .” I found very problematic, for that can only be true for Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He! Should we suppose that some of that knowledge is given to one whom Allah favours with some of His secrets, it is still a condition neither for gnosis [*arif*] itself nor for its perfection.”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him and cause us to benefit from him with his answer, replied, “The

¹ Surah 5 al-Maidah Verse 93.

passage that you have come across stating that gnosis is not complete for a perfect man etc., and which you found problematic, is indeed problematic.”

If the speaker is not a recognized imam in this field, then we do not accept his statement because it contains obscurities and mistakes which are neither factual nor possible.

If he is one of the comprehensive imams then it would be attributed to immoderation and being overwhelmed, or to using these expressions loosely in such a way as to substitute partial matters and details for inclusive and general ones, and this may happen in their speeches in particular and the expressions of the Arabs in general, as is known to those who have thorough and extensive knowledge of the general and specific aspects of that matter.

Your definition of the state of the gnostic [*arif*] is excellent and convincing. Reflect on what we have said; it is concise and carries within it details that will appear with thoughtful scrutiny.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.



A Question from Sheikh Idris bin Ahmad bin Idris al-Saadi

Question {129}

The superior Sheikh Idris bin Ahmad bin Idris al-Saadi of Mecca, known as ‘*al-Shamma*’ asked Imam al-Haddad about the faith of the follower [muqallid]¹.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah benefit us from his answer, answered, “As for your question concerning the science or knowledge of belief and principles, you should know that the faith of the follower as we believe and declare, is sound and undoubtedly so. This faith is to be achieved by the acquisition of the knowledge and awareness of how this religion was when it was just beginning and what he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, accepted from the boorish among the Bedouin Arabs and the desert dwellers, and this is a clear, evident matter. As for you and those like you, we do not consider you a follower but a man of insight whose breast was expanded by Allah to receive faith and Islam.

We hold that whoever reads the Quran and understands it, even partially, and has certainty [*yaqin*] and belief [*iman*] in its contents, is a believer of insight. For the Quran is definitely a transmission of a continuous miracle [*mutawatir*] and definitely miraculous, and that has been so from the time of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, until today. How can one be a follower whose faith is the result of knowledge which is sound and proved by recurrence transmission [*tawatur*] and was never denied or disputed, when faith growing out of insight may be sound even without such knowledge.

As to what al-Sanusi said, that is another matter. The man is a scholar of theology [*kalam*] and a strong partisan of it, and the words of any man are capable of being accepted in part and rejected in part,

¹ A follower [muqallid] is one who embraced Islam and follows someone without reference to the Quran and *Sunna*, just like the earlier Muslims.

except those of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, so the Imams have stated.

If you wish to study some of the science of theology [*kalam*] do not go further than the volume on the principles of creed [aqidah]; which is in the second volume of the '*Ihya*', and focus with more care to studying the first chapter and what is mentioned in the third chapter which is 'Discourse on the Sacredness' [*al-Risala al-Qudsia*]. If you find in it an increase in serenity and expansion of the breast, so be it, otherwise, leave it and try studying other books.

The science of theology [*kalam*] is a remedy for people who have doubts and harbour suspicions, and they are to take from it according to their ailment and, once cured, there is no longer much benefit or profit in studying it.

That which Allah mentions in the Quran concerning this is completely sufficient and provides the fullest benefit and profit. You will find there nothing but generalizations; the same applies to the Sunna and the words of the virtuous predecessors.

It is to be deduced that generalizations are more beneficial than detailed expositions in this science and knowledge, except for those who have doubts and problems.

Imam al-Ghazali elaborates in the volume on "Discourse on the Sacredness [*al-Risala al-Qudsia*] on what we have summarized here, so study it according to your need, otherwise, if beliefs are sound in the manner that we have stated, then it is more important to occupy oneself with the sciences of the Book and *Sunna* and to reform one's heart and behaviour.

What we said here is a summation which you may analyze in your mind. Be thorough when you think and reflect on it!

May Allah the Exalted guide you and us and reinforce you and us with a divine spirit from Him! Amen!



Collection of Questions from the Imam's Companions, Acquaintants and the others

Question {130}

Another one of the jurists [faqih] asked Imam al-Haddad about the meaning of the statement “He who knows himself knows his Lord.”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah the Exalted be please with him, and support us with this answer from him answered, “You should know that this is a hadith transmitted from the Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. It contains, in its brevity, much knowledge and sciences, for he may blessings and peace be upon him, was strengthened with the gift of short concise yet ‘Comprehensive Expression’ [Jawaami al Kalim].

Then you should know that this utterance has many meanings, but we shall confine ourselves to briefly mention only two of them,

Allah the Exalted says,

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوْلَمْ يَكُفِّرْ بِرِبِّكُمْ
أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ.

“Soon will We show them Our Signs on the horizon and in their souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord does witness all things?”¹

And, the Exalted says,

وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبَصِّرُونَ.

“As also in your selves: Will ye not then see?”²

The first meaning of knowledge of oneself is the way to know the Truth is that if you see your incapacity, poverty, shortcomings, and helplessness and that you can neither bring benefit nor prevent harm to yourself you will know that you have a Lord and Creator Who alone brought you into existence and gave you your strengths, Who will ask you to account for what you have acquired and will reward you

¹ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 53.

² Surah 51 Adh-Dhaariyat Verse 21.

wording to your deeds, Who is limitlessly rich and Whose Existence is Real.

One of the knowledgeable [*Arifin*] was asked, “How did you come to know your Lord?” He said, “By the breaking of resolutions,” meaning that his resolution to do something might be followed by a failure to execute it and his resolve not to do something might be followed by it being done, this led him to conclude that he had a Lord and that his fate was not in his own but someone else’s hand and that that was Allah The Eminent, The Wise.

The second meaning is that when you observe your soul and it inclined to evil and falsehood, turning away from good and truth, desirous of enjoying the transient world, forgetful of the everlasting Hereafter, naturally drawn to fulfilling its lustful desires and falling under the yoke of habits, then you know that only its Creator can save you from its dangers, and protect you from its temptations, only the Creator can reform it, and He is Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. Then you concentrate on Him, find Him sufficient, and depend on Him.

When Allah, Transcendent is He, sees that in your heart you sincerely wish to flee to Him and that your desire for sincerity is sound, Allah will flood you with lights [*Nur*] and reveal to you well-guarded secrets into your soul. The soul tends to incite evil, drawn to evil and evil-doers. Allah will pour serenity and conformity to the truth, repugnance of falsehood, the wish to pursue goodness and associate with the best of people, so much so that it will please your heart. Allah will erase from your heart everything that may distract you from travelling the path to proximity. Then you will know the gentleness of your Lord, Eminent and Majestic is He, and His care, acceptance and solicitude for you.

The root of this knowledge is the awareness of the ominous nature of the soul, which leads you to run for protection to Allah the Exalted. So be aware of that and reflect on it as it deserves and be content with this glimmer for it is of the hidden knowledge of the turbulent seas. That which we have mentioned should be informative and sufficient.

Question {131}

One of Imam al-Haddad's companions asked him, "What is the interpretation of His Words, Exalted is He,

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى. قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا. قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَشْكُ آيَاتِنَا فَنَسِيَتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُسْسَى.

"But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Judgment." He will say, "O my Lord! why have You raised me blind, while I had sight before?" Allah will say, "Thus you did, when Our Signs came to you, disregard them, so today you will be disregarded."¹

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him and, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, "You should know that commentators have differed on some of the meanings. But the differences are mostly on terminology.

We shall mention with the utmost brevity, Allah willing, what is precise and more correct. Allah the Exalted says,

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي. "But whosoever turns away from My Message." meaning message from the Quran and the right guidance by not believing it, which is the state of those who disbelieve and deny; "verily for him is a life narrowed down,"

فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

In this world, because of his passionate desire for it, he will remain in distress even though to all outwards appearances he is affluent or else his portion will be meagre and accompanied with impatience and frustration. The Intermediary World [Barzakh] will be distressful because of the kind of torment he will be made to endure in his grave, the narrowness of the pit, tormenting by the angels, the attack by the dangerous beast and so on, and in the Hereafter will be even more distressful because he will be made to eat bitter thorn fruit and drink boiling water perpetually subsisting in the Fire.

¹ Surah 20 Taa Haa Verse 124 – 126.

نَسْأَلَ اللَّهُ الْعَافِيَةَ . We ask Allah for safety!

نَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى ”We shall raise him blind on the Day of Judgment.”

That is blind in both heart and eyesight. Yet “He will say, “O my Lord!

why have You raised me blind,” قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى

Here he denies the blindness in his eyesight which is new to him while he still has blindness of the heart. He shall say, referring to the world

“While I had sight before?” وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا

“Allah will say, قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَنْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيَتَهَا

“Thus you did, when Our Signs came to you, you did disregard them”, You shunned and ignored them!”

“So today you will be disregarded,” وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى .

You will be left in your blindness, wretchedness, painful torment and excessive torture.

نَسْأَلَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَنْ يُثَبِّتَنَا وَإِيَّكُمْ عَلَى الإِيمَانِ وَيُعَصِّمَنَا مِنَ الزِّيغِ وَالضَّلَالِ .

We ask Allah to make us and you firm in faith and guard us against deviating and straying.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ .

Praised and Thanks be Allah in all states.

Question {132}

Another one of Imam al-Haddad’s companions also asked him, “What about the ‘ram’ (male sheep) that the people of Al-Ghil¹ have a custom of leaving free to roam their houses and which they call *Musayir*²?”

¹ There are two area Al-Ghil in the valley of Hadhramaut in Yemen also known as Ghil Bin Yemen and Ghil Bawazir.

² In a long hadith narrated by Al Bahayqi whereby the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him spent a night at the house of Abi Dujana and the Prophet gave Abu Dujana a written talisman to hang in his house instead of using the ‘*Musayir*’.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah grant us benefit from him and, may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, answered, “The ‘ram’ that the people of al-Ghil have a custom of leaving in their houses which they call *Musayir* and which they replace with another whenever it departs is a kind of association Allah [*shirk*], may Allah protects us! Such an association is an immense injustice. It is just like with other similar objects used by the people as a ‘protection’, a cause for the Devil and his troops to gain sway over those people who practice such action. Indeed, Allah the Exalted has given the Devil sway over whoever follows him from the children of Adam, and such practices are one type of following him. Allah the Exalted says,

إِنَّ عِبادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ.

“For over My servants, no authority shall you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you!”¹

Do not do that nor let any of the town’s inhabitants who obey you do it. There is enough protection from all evil and demons, be it jinns or humans in seeking protection in Allah, His Messenger, the Verses of the Quran and the performance of the ritual prayers.

You have received the ‘talisman’ that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, wrote for Abi Dujana Al Ansari when he complained to him that jinn appeared in his house. When he put it in his house, they fled it and retreated in haste.

Hang a copy² that we send you in your house after making another which you can leave where it can be seen and copied for any Muslim who wants it, on condition that you abandon this *Musayir* and rely only on Allah other than Whom none can benefit or harm.

Had those people relied on Allah, purified themselves from evil and established the ritual prayers, no demon would come near them, and no jinn would harm them, on the contrary, they would flee them, for the plotting of the devil is feeble.

¹ Surah 15 al Hijr Verse 42.

² Surah 28 Al Qasas Verse 88; Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 16; Surah 42 Ash Shura; Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 137.

As for sicknesses and infirmities, they are sometimes sent by Allah the Exalted to His faithful servants that He may reward them. Much more afflictions and misfortunes may be driven toward those who carry out such practices and are attached to the jinn; however, they will be sinful and encumbered, not given their wages and rewards.

So, hold firmly to Allah and take protection in Him. Beware of testing Allah which is for a man to say, “Read this verse, write down this talisman or take the advice of such a virtuous man, then see what happens!” To do this is to doubt and because of this most people are deprived of the blessings of the virtuous [*salihin*] and the blessings of their advice, so much so that they now say, “There remains in these times none of the people of secrets [*asrar*] and miracle [*karamat*].” They are held off by their weak determination and little sincerity [*ikhlas*] and certitude [*yaqin*]. He only benefits who is determined and whose certitude [*yakin*] is firm to the extent that it cannot even be imagined that anything can occur to him apart from what the man of Allah he relies on has told him.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِّنْ مُّحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ إِلَيْيْهِ يُطْرَقُ الدَّارُ مِنْ الْعَمَارِ وَالْزَوَارِ
إِلَّا طَارِقًا يَطْرَقُ بِخَيْرٍ: أَمَا بَعْدُ: إِنَّ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ فِي الْحَقِّ سَعْةً. إِنْ كُنْتَ عَاشَقًا مَوْلَاعًا أَوْ فَاجِرًا
مَقْتَحِمًا فَهَذَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ يَنْطَقُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ. إِنَّا كَنَا نَسْتَسْخِنُ مَا كَنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ وَرَسَلْنَا
يَكْتَبُونَ مَا تَمْكِرُونَ، اتَرْكُوا صَاحِبَ كِتَابِي هَذَا وَانْطَلِقُوا إِلَى عِبَدَةِ الْأَصْنَامِ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَزْعُمُ أَنْ
¹مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهَا آخِرٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١﴾
²حَمْ - لَا يُنْصَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ حَمْ - عَسْقٌ ³تَفَرَّقُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ وَبَلَّغَتْ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ
⁴وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ. ﴿٤﴾
⁵فَسَيِّئْ كُفْيَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِينُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

¹ Surah 28 Al Qasas Verse 88.

² Surah 41 Fussilat Verses 1 and 16.

³ Surah 42 Ash Shura Verses 1 & 2.

⁴ Hadith & End of Surah 42 Ash Shura Verse 4

⁵ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 137.

Question {133}

Imam al-Haddad was also asked by one of his close Companion about things that will be obvious in the answer.

Imam al-Haddad answered, “Your blessed letter has arrived, artfully comprising sciences and subtleties that are witness to the uprightness of your tongue and heart and have joined nuance of meanings to the beauty of expression.”

Included in what you say in your letter is your inquiry about whether a man who is authorized to invest with the *khirqa* by a perfect sheikh, but sees himself unworthy of it, may perform the investiture? Then this is followed by other relevant which you are seeking answers.

As things are, we shall now answer the important ones with clear, concise explanations. Allah willing, provide you with full exposition next year. For your letter only reached us just before our departure, at a time subject to dispersion and events in forms that affect their world, which they manifest.

Once this is said, let us begin in briefly answering the important among those questions, we shall, therefore, explain, “It is permissible for one authorized by a recognized sheikh to invest with the *khirqa* even if he feels himself unworthy of it. His feeling of unworthiness adds to his perfection and compensates for whatever deficiencies might be there. He should maintain the conditions of investiture imposed by his sheikh, if any, both in the act itself and the person asking to be invested. He may also authorize others to carry on the investiture; this becomes an obligation if ever he comes to fear that the path, as transmitted through that particular chain, threatens to disappear.

Out of courtesy with his sheikh, he may act on his behalf, being the mediator between the sheikh and those he invests.

As for the words of our master, the *Qutb*, the gnostic [*arif*] Abu Bakr bin Abdullah al-Aydrus Alawi, ‘to him is our arbitration’; it appears that it means that his father is the total well-grounded sheikh

from whom we derive our arbitration [*tahkim*]. Whom we owe it, whom we emulate and whose method we follow, contrary to what Sheikh Bahraq thought.

As for the investiture of our master al-Muqaddam by Sheikh Abu Madyan, it was not done by the Sheikh's hand, but Sheikh Abdullah al-Salih and AbdurRahman al-Maghribi were the mediators between them, and this is what the sheikhs have mentioned.

Question {134}

As for your saying, "Is it permissible for a man who fears ostentation to teach religious knowledge and sciences?" In my opinion, "Yes, it is permissible, and it may even become incumbent if there is no one else to do it. He must, while doing so, strive against his ego to abandon ostentation and become sincere, and he must repent and seek forgiveness for any such thoughts or feelings that may occur to him. The accursed Devil, may Allah curse him! Wishes by this confusion to deprive Muslims of knowledge and action and of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Usually, those who fear ostentation are not ostentatious, but those who are and persistently remain so receive no reward. Besides, they may become sinful, and they are neither rewarded for teaching, nor for guiding others and inviting them to good for these are part of education. But I hope that Allah will allow such a one to benefit from the prayers of those he teaches if they do pray and ask forgiveness for him. The rules governing the matter of ostentation were fully expounded by our Imam and the Imam of all Muslims, our master al-Ghazali in the eighth chapter of the volume on 'Ruinous Issues' in the 'Ihya'. Look into it and join it to the chapter on sincerity which is the seventh in the volume on 'Saving Issues'. There is in it cures for every ailment.

Question {135}

As for your question concerning the bodies of the people of the Garden and their speech, and whether or not they are as the bodies and speech that we know in this world?

In my opinion, “Yes, may are the same way that we know our bodies, speech, eating, drinking and so on. It is not permissible to think otherwise since one should conform in his beliefs to the outward meaning of the Book and Sunna and avoid interpretations. However, the bodies of the people of the Garden are greater than the present bodies, as mentioned in the Sunna and their perceptions much vaster, to the extent that, as has reached us, the vision of a person in the Garden perceives at a distance of seventy years in all directions. They also possess sexual intercourse, eating, and other matters, an immense range appropriate to their situation.

As for those who believe that the bodies of the people of the Garden and their speech and pleasures are to be taken as formless meanings and spiritual perceptions, these are the beliefs of philosophers.

The Proof of Islam said, “Everything that was said concerning issues of the Hereafter is to be taken at face value, with no interpretation. The Attributes of Allah which may suggest comparability and are opposed to transcendence are taken according to one of two schools” either to refrain from interpretations and believe in transcendence, which is the predecessors’ school or wade into definition within the limits of what is appropriate to the Majesty and transcendence of Allah.” This opinion is according to our school and the predecessors [salaf]

Question {136}

As for your question about children: “ The children of Muslims are in the Garden?”

As for the children of idolaters, we think it is better to refrain from advancing an opinion and neither state that they will enter the Garden nor the Fire. There are many differing opinions on that matter, and you are perhaps aware of them.

The state of the children of Muslims in the Garden is perfect and complete childhood since no flaws exist in the Garden; they are as

knowledgeable adults, and this is what appears to us, and we have, as far, come across nothing concerning this.

Rewards for the deeds of Muslim children are recorded in their parents' leaves, and their degree in the Garden is the same. If their parents are unworthy, either because they are disbelievers or for any other reason, then thin will apply to those above them, whether immediate grandfather or more remote ancestor or to those who raised and educated the child, such as a guardian or just ruler. The reasons for which fathers are given these rewards are two, and the first is that they have fathered the children and the second that they raised and educated them.

If a dead child is offered a recitation of Quran or anything similar, it will either increase the beauty and light on his face and so on or it will go to those to whom the rewards for the child's deeds are attributed.

If something is dedicated to a living person, it will be added to his good deeds on the leaves where these are recorded. If the person to whom it is offered is unworthy, whether he be alive or dead, because of idolatry or any other similar thing, it will return to the offerer as if he had not offered it.

These issues are the result of studied opinions based on principles and rules. You will seldom find an explicit text in the Book or Sunna referring to such matters. The most that you can find is a scholar's opinion based on a studied opinion such as we described.

Question {137}

As for your saying about the verse in the 'Taiyya' poem of Sheikh ibn al-Farid and other utterances of similar meaning from some who belong to Sufism, that it may be understood that the speaker intends to attribute to himself or others superiority over the Prophets, peace be on them, You are well aware that the consensus of the community is that Prophets are superior to absolutely everyone else.

Those people (the Sufi) are of all people the most attached to the truth and to follow the Book and Sunna. Those who say about them that they are prone to excessiveness and exaggeration in this direction are more truthful than those who attribute neglect and dissipation to them. Still, both are mistaken, so do give this statement the consideration it deserves.

Indeed, some of them, overcome by spiritual states, have let worth overflow from their tongues that may induce others to think whom you have mentioned and other things as well, all of which are open to much different interpretation.

The best way is to attribute these utterances to the states of overpowering, absorption, loss of discrimination, and having lost possession of the power to decide which is the condition for accountability. A sufficient proof to support this from sound hadith is his saying, peace be upon him, “So happy was he to have found his riding camel after having lost hope of doing so, that, overcome with joy, he said, “O Allah, You are my slave, and I am Your Lord!” Thus would have been explicit disbelief had he said it while believing it and in possession of his power of discrimination, but it became of no consequence when he was overcome with joy and lost his power of perception.

Other proofs to this effect are very numerous, and that is the best way to think of the people of Allah in these matters. The subject is vast, and if Allah is to ordain a more elaborate answer, we shall speak at length on this subject, for it is something that we long for and need. But if Allah does not ordain so, then what Allah has granted us and caused to be written in this letter will be a reminder and an explanation to the intelligent and perceptive.

Further, the ignorant fool or the envious denier will only increase in their hardness and aversion were the matter to be clarified. The Fool is unable to understand due to his foolishness. The second is unwilling to confess and be guided due to his envy and denial.

Success is in Allah's Hand. التوفيق بيد الله.

Question {138}

A Sayyid of his companions asked Imam al-Haddad about the saying of Sheikh Muhyiddin Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani, may Allah be pleased with him, “Every degree between the Human Nature [*Nasut*] and the Unseen World [*Malakut*] is Law [*Sharia*], every degree between the *Malakut* and the Allah’s Kingdom [*Jabarut*] is Truth or Reality [*Haqiqa*], and every degree between the *Jabarut* and the Divinity [*Lahut*] is gnosis (cognizance) [*Maarifa*].”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “You should know that the term *Nasut* indicates the perceptible human world, *Malakut* means the world that is unseen by both human and other beings, the interface between them is termed the Kingdom [*Mulk*]. *Sharia* belongs to this world for it consists in upholding the truth and affirming actions and secondary causes in the manner Allah, the Exalted declared them.

The interface [*tarut*] between *Malakut* and *Jabarut* is the Truth [*Haqiqa*]. *Malakut*, as stated before, is the unseen world and *Jabarut* is part of it, that is *Jabarut* is specific and *Malakut* general. *Haqiqa* is to see everything by Allah and for Allah, by way of direct experience [*dhawq*] and unveiling [*kashf*]. The term *Jabarut* is, as we have said, more specific than *Malakut*. *Lahut* indicates the Names, Attributes and Divine Essence. *Maarifa* is to contemplate these and see their reality unveiled [*kashf*].

Thus whoever establishes *sharia* outwardly, and realizes *haqiqah* inwardly, then considers the lights of the Names, Attributes and Supreme Essence, he is the Perfect Man [*Rijal Kamil*].

Shari'a is Islam, which is submission to Allah, *haqiqah* is Iman and certainty, it is the sincerity with Allah, and *Ma'rifa* is *Ihsan*, extinction by Allah in Allah, and this is in brief what has appeared at this moment of the meaning of these words,

وَالْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

All knowledge is with Allah and Allah knows best.

Question {139}

A respectable man from the Holy City Madina asked Imam al-Haddad about the interpretation given by the gnostic [*arif*] Sheikh Muhammad bin Arabi in the ‘*Futuhat*’ for the Prophet’s saying peace be upon him, in the hadith of the Dajjal, ‘A day as a week and a day as a month.’

The man said, “What does the sheikh mean by this? Which period does it cover to last of which period he mentioned?”

Imam al-Haddad may Allah be pleased with him and benefit us with his answer, replied, “You said you were interested and keen to read the books of the gnostic Sufi Sheikh Muhyiddin Muhammad bin Ali bin ‘Arabi and that you found problematic his interpretation of the meaning of the quoted hadith about the length of the period of the Dajjal, and that you feared, because you found it problematic, that it may have been interpolated in the Sheikh’s writings.

You should know that there are many problematic matters in the Sheikh’s books, particularly in the “*Fusus*” and the “*Fuyuhat*” These may have been either added to the Sheikh’s writings or produced by him when overpowered by a spiritual state [*hal*] and under the overwhelming power of a higher reality. It would then be the kind of immoderation [*shath*] which, in those who are overwhelmed, is excusable.

The Sheikh may have expressed it in such a manner as to conceal behind it secrets and meanings too subtle to be put into words, and in that case, the form of the expressions would be obscure but their spirits and realities sound, firm and not at all farfetched. The words of the Sheikh which you found farfetched fall into one of those categories, by Allah’s will. The Sheikh is one of those who have a firmly ambushed stand in sciences, gnoses, fear [*taqwa*] of Allah and renunciation [*zuhud*] of the world.

It is inappropriate for anyone who fears Allah and knows about the Sheikh’s state [*hal*], that which we have just mentioned, to accuse him of straying from the truth, as some have done who dared to do what they should not have.

If you are read some of the writings of this sheikh and meet with pronouncements that you find problematic, just accept it and do not inquire further and seek farfetched interpretations or you will gain nothing but weariness.

To you and all others who look into the books of this Sheikh's and other similar sheikhs, we council as above because these are the people of the truth [*haqiqah*] and have expressed their knowledge in their books. Those who do not comply and accept what we say are not safe from falling into the greater or smaller errors. May Allah the Exalted make us and you firm with the firm words, and of those who recognize the truth, hold on and conform to it, and recognize falsehood, avoid and cast it away.

Reflect on these words, for within them are important warnings which need elaborations too lengthy for a letter of this size. The best speech is that which is brief yet informative.

Question {140}

One of the people who love [*muhibbin*] and attached to Imam al-Haddad asked about a man who used to see one of the saints [*awliya*] in his dreams then stopped doing so, would this be due to some defect in him or to something else? What effective remedies should he use to correct this defect?

Imam al-Haddad, may we benefit from him, answered, "You ask about a man who used to see in his dreams one of the man of virtue [*solihin*], may Allah have mercy on them, and let us and you benefit from them, and now no longer does. You should know that dreams vision [*ruya*] are good tidings, as stated in a hadith, they are also warnings and cautions for those who heed them and who profit from alerts.

If he was used to seeing the man then was deprived of it, it indicates that his degree has diminished. He should repent and ask for forgiveness and send salutations to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and on his noble family.

One of the gnostics [Arifin] once said, “One of the most profitable invocations for the people of this time, in particular, is to ask for forgiveness abundantly and invoke blessings and peace on the Chosen Prophet. May Allah’s blessings, Benevolent and Merciful is He, and peace be upon him, his Households, Companions and those who follow them with excellence till the Day of Judgment, when people arise before the Lord of the Worlds.

The above is the answer that has appeared to this poor humble soul [faqir] at this time where hearts are suffering from confusing interferences, and sins and defects have become excessive.

وَسَتَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ عَلَامُ الْعَيْوَبِ.

“We ask The One Who knows all that is hidden to forgive you and us.”



Collection of Questions from Sayyid AbuBakr bin Ali Ibrahim al-Bayti

Question {141}

Sayyid AbuBakr bin Ali Ibrahim al-Bayti asked Imam al-Haddad about the saying of Sheikh Yahya bin Muadh al-Razi, “Abandon all the world and you will find all the world. To take it is to abandon it and to abandon it is to take it.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “The words are clear and show not the least obscurity. They mean that whoever abandons the whole world in renunciation, Allah will compensate him with repose both in his heart due to giving up greedy desire and preoccupation, and in his body due to giving up striving and seeking.

Reasonable men wish only for repose in the world, for this do people strive and aspire outwardly [*dzahir*] and inwardly [*batin*], but they miss the way to it which is only found by the renunciates [*zuhud*]. He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and his family saying indicates this,

الرُّهْدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُرِيغُ الْقَلْبَ وَالْبَدْنَ، وَالرَّغْبَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا تُكْثِرُ الْهَمَّ وَالْحَزَنَ.

“Renouncing the world rests the heart and body, while the wish for it increases worry and sadness.”

A sage was once asked, “To whom does the world belong?”

He answered, “To those who abandon it.”

“And to whom does the Hereafter belong?”

He answered, “To those who pursue it.”

Question {142}

The same Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about the words of our master AbuBakr al Siddiq in counselling Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, as he made him his successor, “And know, O Umar that Allah has works to be done by day which He does not accept by night, and works by night which He accepts not by day.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him with his sayings, answered, “This is also clear, for most works have specific times and are acceptable only then. If required at a later time, they fall under a different ruling and need other conditions for their acceptance. Furthermore, some of the things to be done by day involve created human beings, and the needs of the people are mostly to be seen to by day, therefore if a man does not attend to them in time, without an excuse, they are not accepted from him.

As for his saying, “No supererogatory act is accepted until the obligatory ones are fulfilled,” it is clear, for obligatory acts are binding rights to be fulfilled whereas supererogatory ones are freely willed additions; the fulfillment of rights have priority over freely willed additions, both as concerns the dues of the Real and those of creation. This answer is a summary that bears much detailing.”

Question {143}

The mentioned Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad about how to reconcile his, may peace be upon him, two sayings, يُحشَّرُ النَّاسُ حُفَّةً عُرَاءً غُرَلَّا. “People will be crammed together at the resurrection barefoot, naked, uncircumcised.”

And,

إِنَّ الْأُمَّةَ يُحشَّرُ في أَكْفَانِهَا.

“The Community [ummah] will be crammed together in their shrouds.”

Imam al-Haddad answered, “First of all, one has to accept the sounder [sahih] of the two hadiths. If they are of the same degree of soundness, then ‘the gathering in their shrouds’ would be taken to be particular to this Community or a specific group of it. The term Community may be used in many ways, and the term people is of the broader meaning. I believe the hadith, “People will be gathered barefoot,” is sounder than the other; it is also of the broader meaning.”

Question {144}

And the same Sayyid asked Imam al-Haddad whether when concluding a full recitation [khatam] of the Quran, Surah 114 al-Ikhlas should be read three, four or one times?

Imam al-Haddad answered, “It should be read once, like any other Surah or four times, once as part of the full recitation and three in the hope of it being equal to a second full recitation. Should there be any shortcomings in the first recital, it is our good hope that Allah will reward them with the second. The reciter should be the one to read it, no one else, which is better and more correct; the others are to listen to his recitation and recite with him. It has been soundly [sahih] transmitted that the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said that to recite *“Qul huwalla hu Ahad”* once equals one-third of the Quran, and it means that to recite it thrice equals a full recitation and this is what we think. It is then to be recited once, or four times, there is no justification for reciting it three times.

And Allah knows best. وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَم.

A Question from Umar bin Abdullah bin al-Afif al-Hajravni

Question {145}

The scholar Umar bin Abdullah bin al-Afif al-Hajravni asked Imam al-Haddad about the commentary of the Sufi Sheikh Hasan bin Ahmad Ba-Shu'ayb on a poem [*qasidah*] by the gnostic [*arif*] Sheikh Abdul Hadi alSudi, may Allah have mercy on him. Whereby at the mention of divestment he says, “An excellent mount divestment is if he begins to come out of the six, leave the ten, cross the four, and concentrate on the One.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and his answer, replied, “As for the One, that is Allah the Exalted. The six, ten and four are numbers mentioned by the Sheikh to indicate things which the traveller should divest himself. They are, generally speaking, either obstacles which are ahead of him or attachments which are behind him, they cannot be specified unless heard from the commentator, for such things are numerous, and one does not know what he meant by them. A sincere traveller should divest himself of them all and concentrate on the Real One with all his outward [*dzahir*] and inward [*batin*].

For his comment on that part of the poem where he said, ‘Abandon attachments,’ then saying, “Our Sheikh (meaning the *Qutb* Sheikh Abu Bakr bin Salim Alawi) said, “Between you and Allah are ten veils, people constitute nine, while the ego, the devil, and all other obstacles constitute a veil.” That is a matter where travellers differ.

The Sheikh may have meant the one he was addressing or all those present on that particular occasion. There are significant differences between people in that respect, and some may have only one veil, their ego, others may have seventy veils, or more, or less. It cannot correctly state that all have ten veils, of which nine are the other people, and this is what I perceived. Do try to understand this!

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah knows best.

Collection of Questions from a Disciple of Knowledge [Murid]

Question {146}

A disciple of knowledge [murid] asked Imam al-Haddad about the saying of the gnostic Sheikh Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Abil-Khiyar may Allah have mercy on him, “The alighting station of the letter Zay [ز] and the presence of the Dal [د] the letter of perfection, honour and pride.”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him and his answer, replied, “In the name of Allah, the Giver of Openings, the Knower. All Praise and Thanks belongs to Allah the Munificent, the Generous. May Allah grant His blessings and peace to our master and patron Muhammad the guide to the straight path.

This subject belongs to the science of signs. To express it explicitly renders it even more obscure, yet if done by the author himself.

If the author is a man of reality and realization who has combined knowledge with travelling the Path, then let one take the blessing of hearing his words and believe that they are the reality and the truth.

In this way, one may benefit even if one does not understand that which they indicate and at which they aim. There is safety in acceptance, and everything good is in realizing piety [taqwa] and maintaining integrity [istiqama].

And Allah knows best. *وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَم*.

Question {147}

The same disciple [murid] also asked Imam al-Haddad whether in seeking beneficial sciences, one would best read many books, meet with scholars or use his intelligence and understanding?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “One would be acting sincerely, and excellence in doing all these, having first formed the virtuous intention of seeking knowledge, being sincere with Allah while doing so, and aiming to benefit him and others.

The one who combines all these will be a distinguished disciple [*murid*] of knowledge [*ilm*] for whom can expect openings as well as achieving his aim most appropriately.

The one who does not combine them all but is of good intention and sincere with Allah will attain to his share of the quest.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ.

“To everyone are degrees (or ranks) according to their deeds: for ¹your Lord is not unmindful of anything that they do.”

Question {148}

The same disciple [*murid*] also asked Imam al-Haddad about the sign of an answered prayer and about other things, which will appear in the Imam’s answer.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be please with him and benefit us from his answer, replied, “First of all, let it be known, Allah answers every prayer from a pious believer who turns to Him. However, the answer is either immediate or delayed. Allah, in His solicitude for His servant, may give him what is better, it may be different from what he has prayed. There are verses of the Quran and hadiths, sound [*sahih*] and weaker [*dhaif*], to that effect. The signs of the prayer being answered are like a shiver and a cooling off of the heart. The learned mentioned before these signs and concerns the eagerness to ask for what he has prayed. There are obstacles and circumstances which may prevent a prayer being answered, among which are to eat or wear something illicit [*haram*], to persist in treating others unjustly, to pray

¹ Surah 6 al Anaam Verse 132.

while distracted from Allah, for he, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحِيْبُ دَعَاءَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ عَافِلٍ.

"Know that Allah does not answer the prayer of a distracted heart," to have severed one's kinship bonds, or quarrelled with a fellow believer and broken relations with him unjustly.

As for the question about one who has asked his Lord for things he wishes or needs, then see some of them fulfilled, would this be a sign that all other requests would be answered as well? Yes, it is a sign of that if you take into account hope, the vastness of Divine Generosity, and thinking-well of Allah. Still, it may not be a sign of the reasons which have to do with either the man who prays or the thing he prays, and this is the answer that has appeared for the time being, and Allah knows bests. These things need elaboration, they are comprehensive, and it would be too lengthy to detail them. The best of words are those which are brief yet informative.

وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ

Allah is The Helper.

Question {149}

The said disciple [*murid*] also asked Imam al-Haddad about the 'resting pause' [*jalsat-istiraha*]"

Imam al-Haddad answered, "Many scholars may Allah's mercy be on them, have spoken about it. What we feel inclined to accept is what was said by Sheikh Ahmad bin Umar al-Hubaushi as well as by Sayyid Muhammad al-Barzanji, for it avoids constraint and the kind of overzealous inquiry that is discouraged in most matters.

Let him who has asked know that the 'resting pause' is a matter about which early scholars have differed as to whether or not it is a Sunna. Those who say it is not a Sunna say that the Messenger of Allah did it, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, in his last days

when he had become weak and found some difficulty in rising after prostration.

Furthermore, those who affirm it say that it is incredibly brief, just enough to say ‘Glory to Allah’ [*SubhanAllah*]. Some even say that one should just prolong to announce ‘Allah is Great’ [*Takbir*] starting from when one begins to rise from prostration and ending with the completion of the movement. In this way, they did not consider an excessive prolongation since the ‘resting pause’ is to be so brief.

If this action is as mentioned, then one should not overthink with such obsessiveness [*waswas*] about whether his prayer is valid or not. The person should consider differences of opinion and other such things. He, peace be upon him, said,

“The excessive will perish!” هَلَكَ الْمُتَنَطِّعُونَ.

هَلْكَ الْمُتَنَطِّعُونَ.

He repeated it thrice. So let the man engaged in ritual prayer be concerned to the utmost and concentrate on his presence of heart and humility before Allah in his prayer, on emptying his breast from all obsessions, thoughts of the world which threaten to absorb him when he prays and prevent him from being present and humble.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ

And Allah knows best.

Question {150}

As for your inquiry concerning dedicating one's reward for a monetary charity to the dead, whether one's parent or otherwise, it is something that should do and was transmitted in hadith. The person should invoke blessings on the Messenger, then say,

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعِلْ ثَوَابَ ذَلِكَ . . .
“O Allah, give the reward for this . . .”

Then specifying what it is for like to the spirit [*ruh*] of ‘so and so’ or (the spirits) of ‘so and so’ and ‘so and so’!”

In regards to the recitations of the Quran, there are differences between scholars as to whether the reward for them reach the dead.

It seems that the position of the school of Imam al-Shafii, may Allah have mercy on him, and others are that it does not, but some of his disciple [murid] believed that it does. So let the person say,

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ ثَوَابَ مَا قَرَأْتُ مِنَ الْحِزْبِ الْفُلَانِيِّ أَوِ السُّورَةِ الْفُلَانِيَّةِ إِلَى رُوحِ فَلَانٍ مِنْ
وَالْدِلِّ وَغَيْرِهِ.

“O Allah give the reward for what I have recited of this (specific) hizb or this (specific) surah to the spirit [ruh] of so and so.”

This prayer [dua] should be done with only a portion of his charity and a portion of whatever Quran he recites, but he should keep most of it to himself. This view we concluded on this subject and coincided with from the opinions of scholars. Whatever is recited for a fee has to be dedicated wholly to those who pay the amount as charity [sadaqa].

As for hearing someone invokes, “And inscribe a reward similar to it in our record,” the said prayer which may or may not be answered.

The angel who replies, “Amen! And to you the same!” concerns the prayer of a believer for his brother in his absence, it should not be generalized. Ordinary people are sometimes correct, but more often than not, they are mistaken in their words and deeds, and this is our stance in this matter.

وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah and His Messenger know best.



Collection of General Questions to Imam al-Haddad

Question {151}

A man asked Imam al-Haddad about some expressions used by the Sufis, like ‘the light of the intellect’, ‘the light of knowledge’ and ‘the light of the truth’, whether these ‘lights’ were different spirits that enter the heart or something else. But the intellect which acts as a mirror where appear the lights of knowledge of various kinds, gnostic wisdom and inspirations, being then the source of them, like the ‘seeing eye’ where bodies are reflected and the beholder gains from that the knowledge of them. Please clarify for this yearning person this well-guarded secret?” End of Quote of the Questioner about his question.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him with his opinion, answered, “Praise is for Allah. We have received your blessed question, which indicates the need and thirst of the questioner for knowing the truth which hits the mark: the answer and his acceptance of it. The questioner should know, may Allah grant him success, that the multiplicity of lights is nothing to be surprised about when it often occurs in the expressions of the Sufis and others, or when it happens in reality.

The gist of it is that between the three mentioned light, and there are specific differences which necessitate both their multiplicity and there are different degree each above the other. Just like you may say, “The light of the eyesight and the light of the inner insight, and the light of the secret,” and this will bring out the multiplicity and the differences. One may ask, concerning this example, whether the secret is in ‘inner insight’ or differs between them. In our opinion, one is general and the other specific, for the term secret is general while the term inner insight is specific.

Much can be said about this as Imam al-Ghazali has written a book entitled, “The Niche of Lights” where he mentions the lights and

their degrees as well as many other subtle issues from the sciences and knowledge of truth and reality. And God knows best and is Wiser.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ وَأَحْكَمُ.

And Allah knows best and is Wiser,

Question {152}

A man asked Imam al-Haddad the issue which will be evident in the answer.

You have asked, may Allah reform your affairs, about the seventy and the eight mentioned by our master the gnostic [*arif*] Imam Abu Hasan al-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him, in the ‘Litany of Light’ [*Hizb al-Nur*] once in the context of supplication and then in that of asking for protection.

The seventy and the eight for whose sake he is beseeching Allah to grant him something, are necessarily different from the seventy and the eight from which he seeks protection. There is a broad scope for interpretation in both contexts, in the first, the mentioned numbers may be Prophets, angels, or some of the Most Excellent Names of Allah, and so on.

The numbers mentioned in the second context may be attributes of the ‘inciting soul’, incidental ailments, demons, and so on.

We believe, the one who prays using such formulae should form the intention of conforming to the meaning that the Sheikh to whom the litany belongs intended, and this is wider and more complete, for the Sheikh is a trustworthy gnostic [*arifin*] possessing the knowledge of the gnostic [*ilm ladunni*].

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah knows best.

Question {153}

The person also asked how one should recite the litanies of our master Sheikh Abu Hasan al-Shadhili mentioned above?

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be delighted with him and his reply, answered, “You should know that a certain gnostic [*arifin*] once said that one should recite the ‘Litany of the Sea’ [*Hizb al-Bahr*] each ritual prayers.

Another gnostic [*arif*], and I think it was ibn bintal Maylaq, and he was one of the comprehensive Shadhili sheikhs, said that one should recite *Hizb al-Bahr* after the dawn [*fajr*] prayer.

Then the Litany [*Hizb*] being the ‘Greater Litany’ [*Hizb Kabir*] of Sheikh Abi Hasan, which he called the Greatest Alchemy, then ‘Litany of Light’ [*Hizb al-Nur*] after the midday [*zohor*] prayer.

Then recite the *Hizb al-Bahr* after the afternoon [*asar*] prayer.

And recite the ‘Litany of Oneness’ [*Hizb al-Tawhid*] after the sunset [*magrib*] prayer, all these being Sheikh Abi Hasan’s, and the ‘Litany of Praise, Thanks and Gratefulness’ [*Hizb al-Hamid wal Shukr*] after the night prayer, this *hizb* belonging to Sheikh Abi Abbas al-Mursi, the Sheikh’s disciple and heir.

It is incumbent that one should be recited in the best possible state, which is in ritual purity, orientation toward the Qibla, humble submission and presence of the heart with Allah. In that manner will be aimed for benefit and enlightening of the heart occur. One should also precede them with the invocations that were transmitted from the Messenger, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, whether verses of the Quran, invocations or prayers to follow each ritual prayer, and this is what was stated by those who were concerned with this subject.

The secret is to be sincere in concentration, firmly resolute, and of pure intention.

Question {154}

Imam al-Haddad was asked about issues that will become clear from the answer.

The Imam answered, “You ask about the state [*hal*] of the three persons who came to a circle of remembrance [*khalaqa dhikr*], one of whom found an empty place and occupied it, the second of whom sat outside the circle [*halaqa*], and the third of whom went away.

To all appearances, the state [*hal*] of the first one is praiseworthy and excellent.

That of the second is not far from the first, since showing shyness before Allah is honourable and blameless.

The third who went away deserves to be criticized, and this turning away may well lead him to sin if it is due to arrogance and belittling the remembrance [*dhikr*] and those who do it.

But if it is out of distraction or neglect of right action, then it is enough that he has missed his being remembered, praised and rewarded by Allah.

As for the Circles [*halaqa*] where the Great Quran is recited, and those where beneficial useful religious knowledge is taught are indeed circles of remembrance in its broader meaning for every man who obeys Allah and is occupied with that which draws him nearer to Him, Exalted is He and the home of the afterlife, because he is one of those who the Exalted remembers as stated by scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi in his book ‘*al-Adhkar*’ and others.

He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَصْبَحُ عَلَى كُلِّ سُلَامٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ صَدَقَةً.

“Each of their body parts a charity is due when the morning appears.”

This remembrance is a charity that originates in thankfulness and how to be thankful to perfection.

Obviously, it is not an offence not to act on this but is to be attributed to distraction and described as a shortcoming in giving Allah the Exalted His due of thanks, and this is why he, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said in one version of the hadith,

فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ رَحَزَ نَفْسَهُ عَنِ النَّارِ.

“And whoever does that will have inched himself away from the Fire.”

And in another, وَيَجِزِي عَنْ ذَلِكَ رَكْعَتَانِ يَرْكَعُهُمَا مِنَ الصَّحْيَ.

“And this is fulfilled by two prostrations [*raka'as*] performed in mid-morning prayers [*dhuha*].”

These are meritorious divine acts that a servant profits from and that draw him nearer to his Lord, for all the issue mentioned in this hadith are supererogatory [*nawafil*] devotions that lead one nearer to Allah. Just as his saying, peace be upon him,

فَمَنْ سَبَحَ اللَّهُ وَفَعَلَ وَفَعَلَ. وَذَكَرَ أَشْيَاءَ مِنَ الْحَيْرَاتِ الْمُفَرِّبَةِ إِلَيْهِ سُبْحَانَهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَ.

“And whoever praise Allah in a divine act of worship or remembrance is an excellent deed that brings him closer to the All-Mighty.”

As for his saying, peace be on him,

“Look for me among the weak.” ابْعُونِي فِي الْمُضْعَفَاءِ.

These are the destitute and feeble among virtuous believers. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessing and peace upon him loved them, sat in their company, and said,

إِنَّمَا تُنْصَرُونَ وَتُرْزَقُونَ بِضُعَفَائِكُمْ.

“You are given rain and provision because of the weak among you.”

And for them were revealed His words, Exalted is He,

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاءِ وَالعشَّيِّ.

“And restrain yourself with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening.”¹

¹ Surah 18 al-Kahf Verse 28.

And the Exalted says,

وَلَا تَطْرُدُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاءِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ.

“And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening, desiring His Face.”¹

And the beginning of Surah Abasa (He Frowned). These are statements to that effect which explain the issue. This answer is what has appeared to us at the present moment, and what is to be understood from the opinions of other scholars, may Allah have mercy on them.

وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمْ.

And Allah and His Messenger know best.

Question {155}

Someone questioned Imam al-Haddad about the Prophet, may Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him, saying,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدُ حَلْقِهِ وَرِضَى نَفْسِهِ وَزِنَةُ عَرْشِهِ وَمِدَادُ كَلِمَاتِهِ.

“Transcendent is Allah and praises be to Him as many times as the number of His creations, and all His Spiritual Blessings, and all the beauty of His Throne and all His true sayings.”²

and whether the same reward is obtained by repeating the same formula with ‘Allah is Great’ [takbir] and ‘There is no other god but Allah’[tahlil]?

¹ Surah al Anaam Verse 52.

² Narrated by Juwairiyah Umi Mukminin, may Allah be please with her, that the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, left his home one morning after subuh prayer whilst Juwairiyah was reciting the zikr. After completing the Dhuha prayer, the Prophet s.a.w returned home and saw Juwairiyah was still reciting her zikr, he then asked, “Are you still reciting the zikr since I left?” He then said, “When I left you I recite four phrases three times, if you compare them with what you recite since dawn they are more benefiting.” He then recite the above phrases.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “That which he, may blessings and peace be upon him, specifically mentioned is not to be equated with anything else.

However, should a sincere servant similarly use the said formula and hope for Allah’s mercy, for the graces of Allah are immense, he will either receive the reward for it or at any rate some it.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيغُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.

“Allah allows not the reward of those whose works are excellent to go to waste.”¹

And Peace وَالسَّلَامُ

Question {156}

Someone who loves Imam al-Haddad [*Muhibbin*] asked him asked a question.

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “You inquire about a narration Hadith [*akhbar*] and a Report [*atsar*] stating that each verse of the Quran has an obvious [*dzahir*] and inward [*batin*], a single limited, and general rising place.

Scholars have discussed this at length, for instance, Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, in the ‘*Ihya*’ and ‘*al-Arbain*’, Abu Talib al-Makki, the author of ‘*Awarif*’ as well my opinion, and others, much can be said about this issue. However, it is unimportant to inquire about it because most of it relates to the sciences of the outward [*dzahir*].

As for the question about the invocations [*dua*] and prayer to recite during the night’s supererogatory prayers [*tahajjud*], we use this formula after the two light prostrations [*rakaats*], and this is the best time for it. It is different from the invocation and prayer that are recited after waking up, passing the hands over one’s face, and lifting one’s

¹ Surah 9 at Tawba Verse 120.

face toward heaven, these I use when I wake up and before the ritual purification [*wudhu*].

We have noticed that the author of “*Tuhfat al-Mutaabbid*” has quoted these recital prayers that begin with,

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ فِيْمِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ، إِلَّا

“O Allah! Praises and thanks to You, You are the Guardian of the Heavens and Earth and whoever enters them” etc. till the end;

among the prayers to be recited at the beginning of the sunnah prayer. There does not seem to be any reason for that, so let it be used after the two light prostrations [*rakaats*].

As for the Chapters [*Surah*] of the Quran which is, according to Hadith, to be recited every night such as Surah 36 *Ya-Sin*, Surah 72 *al-Jinn*, Surah 44 *al-Dukhan*, Surah 67 *al-Mulk* and Surah 56 *al-Waqia*, it is better to recite them during the first part of the night. If for any reason, one is not able to perform so then let it be on awakening, and this is what we do at those times when we sleep early or are prevented by another reason.

The above are our answers to your questions according to what we understood at that time.

وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ.

Indeed, Allah and His Messenger know best.



Collection of Questions from Umar bin Salim Ba-Humayyid

Question {157}

Umar bin Salim Ba-Humayyid inquired about issues which will become apparent from the answers.

Imam al-Haddad, may we benefit from him from his answers, replied, “As for your question about the Maghrib being performed very soon after the Call [*azan*] in this blessed month Ramadan, so that one worries that were he to break his fast with anything more than water, such as dates, for instance, he would need to wash his mouth thoroughly to remove their traces and may thus miss the initial *takbir* [*takbir ihram*] or even more of the prayer.

To hasten to break one’s fast and to do so before the Maghrib prayer is a Sunna which both earlier and later generations have upheld, and this can be done with water if one fears missing part of the prayer as you have mentioned for the reason that you have mentioned.

As for breaking fast with dates or similar, it is another Sunna. If that is done after the prayer for the mentioned reason, then it does not make much difference. What we think is best is to break the fast with dates, then water, then prayer, giving each its due.

Question {158}

As for your question about having heard one of the ordinary people say, having listened to the caller [*muazzin*] ending the call [*azan*],
“There is no divinity other than Allah” لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Your response approval of it,
“Yes. there is no divinity save Allah!” نَعَمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

You inquire whether there was any narration concerning this. You should know that we have heard about no transmission concerning this and it is better to follow the Sunna. Habits cannot be depended on if different from the transmitted *Sunnas*, even if worthy of approval!

Question {159}

And you asked about the speaker of the sermon [*khatib*] saying, when mentioning crops and plants during the prayer for rain, “And protect them from many afflictions!” It seems that you understood that Allah would protect them from many but not all afflictions, this is not so, for the sentence means, “Protect them from all afflictions, and these are many.”

‘Many’ here serving to indicate the multitude of afflictions not that they are divided. He put afflictions after many to maintain the rhyme in his prose because it has more effect on people, especially in sermons. Had he just said afflictions and neither added many nor few, as he has done elsewhere, it would have been good, but this is better in terms of eloquence and rhythm. He has also said in one of his Ramadan sermons, “I fulfilled in you many wishes,” Meaning my many wishes. Think about it for it is clear.

Question {160}

As for your inquiry about, “The sins that people commit in the month of Ramadan despite the devils being shackled?”

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah be pleased with him, answered, “You should know that it has been mentioned in a hadith that the one who is shackled is the worst among them, and if that is so then no problem exists.

But if the shackling concerns all of the devils then it is the soul, for the ‘soul which incite to evil’¹ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَكَمَارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ commits sins all by itself, especially under some circumstances and in matters which it lusts after. Scholars have mentioned such thoughts which are independent (of the devil’s insinuations), and similar things were alluded to by Sheikh Ibn ‘Arabi.

¹ Surah 12 Yunus Verse 53

Question {161}

As for your saying, “only the ‘Perfect Man’, that is the *Qutb* and the *Ghawth*, can pray the ‘perfect prayer’?”

Imam al-Haddad response, “This is not so!” We believe, those belonging to the Circle of Sainthood [*wali*] and the elect among believers perform their prayers perfectly. Still, they differ in the degree of their perfection in achieving them, as in other devotions and worship in concentrating on Divinity.

In this matter, the ‘Perfect Man’ [*Insanul Kamil*] is the most accomplished and complete among them since he faces the unique Saintly Presence which is the Presence of Unicity [*Hadrat al Ahadiyya*]. When one becomes perfect, his prayers and act of worship become perfect.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالْفَضْلُ لِلَّهِ.

Praise to Allah, all good is Allah’s.

يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُخْتِصُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ.

He gives whom He wills, favours whom He wills,

وَهُوَ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ.

And He is the One with Great Favours.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah knows best.

فَسْلَمٌ

Collection of Questions from the illumined Sheikh, Abdullah bin Uthman al-Amudi

Question {162}

The righteous scholar, the illumined Sheikh, possessor of both the knowledge and the practice of it Abdullah ibn Uthman al-Amudi asked Imam al-Haddad some questions to which he answered,

Imam al-Haddad, may Allah benefit us, and bestow on the Muslims and us preference for his existence with his answer, replied, “The answers to the questions which you pose in the letter that arrived with your illumined son Said bin Abdullah al-Almudi is clear and should not be obscure for someone such as you. However, we shall briefly discourse on them so that problems, if any, will be solved.

As for your inquiry about it having been transmitted that the Garden of Eden is the summit of the Garden and overlooking all the other Gardens, I cannot remember ever having heard of it. What is well known about Firdaus and Eden is that they are the navel and centre of the Garden. There is, however, no contradiction between the two and, if the first transmission is sound, they can easily be combined. It has been transmitted that ‘Firdaus’ is the higher most of the Garden and that its roof is the Throne of the All-Merciful. There is a prayer of the Prophet where he says,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ الَّتِي ظَلَّهَا عَرْشُكَ، وَنُورُهَا وَجْهُكَ، وَخُشُونَهَا رَحْمَتُكَ.

“O Allah! Verily, I ask You for that Garden, whose shade of which is Your Throne, the light of which is Your Face, and the content of which is Your Mercy.”

It suffices for the believing servant simply to ask Allah for the Garden, especially when this knowledge, behaviour, and sincerity are as those of the elect of this time.

It has reached us that the Imam ibn al-Mubarak, may Allah have mercy on him, came out to meet his friends one day saying, “I was so impudent with my Lord last night that I asked him for the Garden.”

There is also the hadith of the bedouin who said, “I know nothing of your droning¹ nor that of Mu‘adh’s droning, so I just ask,

أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَسْتَعِنُهُ.

“Allah for the Garden and His protection against the Fire.”

He replied, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

“Around these do we drone.” حَوْلَهَا نُدَنِّينَ.

Question {163}

You ask about the Prophet’s may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, saying, “If I and the Son of Mary were to be judged for what these two have committed..”, meaning, the index finger and the thumb, despite the two were infallible noble messengers.

There is nothing obscure in this, for the rights of Allah on His servants can be fulfilled by none, not even the ‘Near Angel’ or a Messenger and Prophet. The elects have sin appropriate to their ranks, such as looks and thoughts even at times of devotions; almost no human being is safe from these.

Look at the stories of Adam, Abraham, David and Solomon, may peace be upon them, which are mentioned in the Quran and hadith and you will understand the meaning of his words, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him.

We had referred briefly to such issues in answering a letter written to us by a Sayyid from al-Shihr, you may perhaps have it in your collection of letters. There are also references to this in the hadith of ‘intercession’ when people go to Adam, and the matter ends up with the leader of all Messengers.

¹ The Beduin is referring to recitation of *hizb*, remembrance and prayers.

Question {164}

As for your inquiry about the hadith where it is mentioned that

مَنْ قَامَ بِعَشْرِ آيَاتٍ لَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ، إِلَى أَنْ قَالَ: (وَمَنْ قَامَ بِأَلْفٍ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْمُقْطَرِينَ.)

“The one who stands up (in prayer) with ten verses will not be recorded among the distracted...” until it says: “...and the One who stands up (in prayer) with a thousand verses is recorded among the very rich¹. ”

This hadith is very well known.

The evident meaning is that it refers to praying during the night vigil, for most of our virtuous predecessors’ nocturnal recitations of the Quran were during ritual prayer, as was authentically transmitted about him, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and the predecessors [salaf] among the community, by which are meant the Companions [sahabah] and Followers [Tabien].

As for recitations outside the ritual prayers, whether in the day or at night, in a sound hadith, may Allah’s blessings be upon him his family and peace,

أَنَّ الْحَرْفَ بِعَشْرِ حَسَنَاتٍ.

“That each letter counted as a good deed.”

And there is a record that according to the Commander of the Faithful Ali bin Abi Talib, may Allah honour him, the one who recites the Quran standing up in prayer has each letter counted as one hundred good deeds, if sitting down in prayer then fifty good deeds, if outside prayer but in a state of ritual purity then twenty five good deeds, if not in a state of purity then for each letter ten good deeds. Such statements made by a Companion never originate in him; they are therefore given the value of a connected [marfu] hadith.

¹ Rich as in reward of one *qinthal*, and a *qinthal* is equivalent to one thousand one hundred *auqiyah*, and that one *auqiyah* is more than whatever that is between the heavens and earth. This hadith is recorded by at-Tabranni.

There are on this subject hadiths which may give the impression that they contradict each other and that the reciter receives rewards for a diversity of recorded good deeds. There is nothing unlikely or impossible about that, for the grace of Allah is vast.

People differ in their degrees as far as recitation, as well as other things, are concerned, so ascribe the differences in reward to the differences in performance.

وَلِكُلِّ ذَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوْقِنُهُمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَهُنَّ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ.

“And to all are assigned degrees according to the deeds which they have done, and so that Allah may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them.”¹

Question {165}

As for your inquiry concerning those virtuous servants of Allah who are ‘people of misbehaviour’ [*ahlul-takhib*], the people subject to the ‘Divine Attraction’, whose minds have become overwhelmed by the realities which appeared to them and which they were unable to bear. They feared they might become known and that people may become attached to them, so they hid behind some of that kind of reprehensible behaviour.

We say, “These times are as described by Qushayri in his discourse and following him was the Sheikh ibn ‘Arabi, noted in their writings.

Qushayri said, “As for the tents they resemble theirs,
But I see that the women of the place are unlike theirs.”

As for ibn ‘Arabi, he said, “Qushayri said this because he saw those who imitated their manners without following their guidance; As for now, there are neither women nor tents.”

¹ Surah 46 al-Ahqaf Verse 19.

Today they have gone and so have their traces and manners. Nothing remains of their tales, the pardon of Allah, and thinking-well of all believers, in generated and in particular.

All people are now ‘people of misbehaviour’ rare are those who still firmly maintain their Unification [*tauhid*], prayers, zakat, fasts, and hajj, as you can see and hear.

وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانَ.

May Allah help us!

If anyone is still found who is said to be in that state you inquired about, to whom virtue is attributed, whose Unification [*tauhid*] is firm and who is careful to establish the ritual prayer and similar rules of religion, who avoids major sins such as adultery, ostentation, dispossessing others of their wealth and associating with the sinful and those who persist in transgressions, then he falls into any kind of minor misdeeds such as looking at women, listening to frivolous entertainment, or other similar things about which disagreement among scholars as to permissibility exist. He should be left to his state [*hal*] and his Lord, this is by way of choosing safety and avoiding denial of that of which one has no thorough knowledge. For Allah have secrets of His own in his creation.

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِن يَشَاءُ يَرْحَمُكُمْ أَوْ إِن يَشَاءُ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا.

“It is your Lord that knoweth you best: If He please, He granteth you mercy, or if He please, punishment: We have not sent thee to be a disposer of their affairs for them.”¹

فَلَمْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِرِتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَيِّلًا.

Say, “Everyone acts according to his disposition: But your Lord knows best who it is that is best guided on the Way.”²

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ.

And Allah knows best.

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 54.

² Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 84.

We have dictated these few words concerning these questions, as they bear elaboration although clear.

نَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَنَفْوَضُ إِلَيْهِ وَنَعُوذُ بِهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا

“We ask Allah for forgiveness, rely on Him, and seek His protection against the evil in ourselves and that in our deeds.”

سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَمْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ.

They said: "Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth, it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."¹

Dictation ended in Dhul-Qaeda, one of the forbidden months of the year 1125. May Allah bless our leader Muhammad, his family and companions, and grant them peace.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ

Allah knows best!

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدَ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

May Allah's blessings and peace be upon our leader Muhammad, his family, and companions

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

All praises and thank belong to Allah,
the Lord of All Universe

وَسَلَّمَ

¹ Surah 2 al- Baqara Verse 32.

Notes